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This research describes and explicates the phenomenon of information technology enabled (ITE) followership on social media platforms. Drawing from extant followership literature, ITE followership is proposed and explored. One social media platform, Twitter, is studied in depth. In Phase I of this research, focus groups of Twitter users are interviewed. Using the data from the focus groups, Twitter's ITE followership is conceptualized, assumptions made about this ITE followership are verified, and key constructs associated with this phenomenon are identified. In Phase II of this research, Twitter data is collected from the followers and the followed, and using linguistic analytics via IBM Watson Personality Insights, the identities formed as a byproduct of leader-follower interaction are examined and evaluated. In Phase III of this research, applying the key constructs identified in Phase I, a survey instrument is developed. In addition, a survey of Twitter followers is undertaken to understand the impact of follower characteristics (sense of power, electronic courage, and social capital) on follower behaviors (voice, helping, empowering, disempowering) in the followers' Twitter role. The major contributions of this research include the following: defining the phenomenon of ITE followership on social media platforms focusing on Twitter, illustrating inquiries into ITE followership from multiple perspectives using the constructionist and role-based lenses, applying multiple methods (focus groups, big data analytics, and a survey) to investigate Twitter's ITE followership, and broadly, offering the examination of ITE

followership as an answer to theorizing social media phenomena on information technology platforms.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENABLED FOLLOWERSHIP ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS: A MULTIMETHOD ANALYSIS OF TWITTER

by

Vishal Uppala

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Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

I dedicate this dissertation to Mom and Dad.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Vishal Uppala, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today, a huge number of people use social media platforms. Approximately 2.34 billion people use them worldwide (Statistica, 2018). Many of these people use these platforms daily (Smith and Anderson, 2018). Social media platforms are an integral part of life online as their usage proliferates. The wide adoption of these platforms merits research efforts to understand them and their associated phenomena.

Beyond the sheer magnitude of social media platform adoption, consumers are making use of these platforms "to create, modify, share, and discuss internet content" (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre, 2011, p. 241). This consumer behavior on social media platforms has major implications for businesses. The behavior on social media platforms can "significantly impact a firm's reputation, sales, and even survival" (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 241). For example, on April 9, 2017, a passenger, David Dao, was forcibly removed for refusing to give up his seat on an overbooked United Airlines flight. On social media platforms, video of the incident went viral triggering outrage, damaging the United Airlines' brand, and resulting in United Airlines shifting their existing business practices (Goldstein, 2017).

Social media influences many aspects of consumer behavior such as awareness, information acquisition, opinions, attitudes, purchase behavior, post-purchase

communication, and evaluation (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Sotiriadis and Zyl (2013) found that consumers use Twitter for electronic word-of-mouth, online reviews, and recommendations for assessing service in industries such as tourism. It has also been found that when making a purchase decision, 88% of buyers consider online reviews to be very influential (BrightLocal, 2014). According to Hajli (2014), social media positively influences trust, perceived usefulness, and intention to buy. Direct communication in social media is more important as 90% of consumers trust peer recommendations and only 33-41% trust online ads--banner ads, video ads, and search result ads (Nielsen, 2009).

To influence consumer behavior, celebrities have been used in marketing communication strategy, especially endorsement marketing. It has now become a common practice to use celebrities for endorsement in business (Erdogan, 1999). With endorsement marketing, celebrities communicate directly with consumers, and their influence shapes consumer behavior. Businesses have employed endorsement marketing to attain a differential competitive advantage (Erdogan, 1999). Businesses invest large sums of money to align their brands and themselves with endorsers (Erdogan, 1999). When considering endorsers, businesses evaluate and decide on many factors such as credibility and expertise along with audience and influence (Erdogan, 1999; Bakshy, Hofman, Mason, and Watts, 2011). As such, with the advent of the internet and social media platforms, there is now a new breed of endorsers called the social media influencers. The social media influencers are able to leverage the social media platform to

"disproportionately impact the spread of information or some related behavior of interest" compared to other platform users, the ordinary influencers (Bakshy et al., 2011).

1.1. Social Media Influencers

A social media influencer is "an independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media" (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, and Freberg, 2011, p. 90). Social media influencers can share their experiences, give reviews, and develop brands (Neilson, 2011). These influencers build relationships and advocate to consumers with their communication (Freberg et al., 2011). As such, their endorsement and advocacy can influence consumer behaviors (Neilson, 2011).

Social media influencers play an important role in managing the interactions and the influences on the social media platforms. When social media influencers speak, people listen and act (Howe, 2016). As a result, "[i]ndividuals increasingly take cues from one another rather than from institutional sources like corporations, media outlets, religions, and political bodies" (Charron, Favier, and Li, 2006). Such communication constitutes social computing. According to Charron et al. (2006), "[t]o thrive in an era of social computing, companies must abandon top-down management and communication tactics, weave communities into their products and services, use employees and partners as marketers, and become part of a living fabric of brand loyalists."

Businesses are employing marketers to engage in social media marketing whereby marketers use social media to grow their businesses (Stelzner, 2014). Consequently,

using social media influencers, businesses are building brand image and brand equity (Booth and Matic, 2011). However, public reception of social media influencers may not always be positive. At times, the employment of social media influencers is well received. At other times, the employment of social media influencers is poorly received. For example, in a Pepsi ad with Kendall Jenner (April 2017), Jenner gives a Pepsi to a police officer in a situation involving social unrest. This ad received mixed reviews; while some people liked it, others considered it to be offensive, and on the day of its release, Pepsi took a stance and pulled the ad (Scott, 2017; Taylor, 2017).

Also, social media influencers actively engage in branding. The improved understanding of social media influencers can allow for better brand management. They can build brand image, and they can create brand equity (Howe, 2016). At times, social media influencers are becoming the brands. That is, they are marketing themselves and their careers as brands (Lair, Sullivan, and Cheney, 2005). For example, Kylie Jenner, at 20, has had tremendous success as a social media influencer. She is able to leverage her presence on social media platforms to sell products such as lip kits via Kylie Cosmetics and is on her way to be the youngest, self-made billionaire (Robehmed, 2018). Understanding social media influencers can allow for the generation of leads. American Marketing Association (2018) defined a lead as “an inquiry or referral about an individual or organization that is a potential customer.” By improving lead quality, social media marketing communication strategy can be improved.

On some social media platforms, social media influencers have followers. Followers are the audience that is persuaded and led by the social media influencers. In some instances, this happens by social media influencers' virtue of authenticity and reach. The social media platform supports social media influencers in the interaction with their followers. Social media influencers act as leaders on these platforms. According to Kellerman (2007, p. 1), "[t]here is no leader without at least one follower." Hence, it is not unusual for a social media influencer to cultivate a followership and to be characterized by having many followers.

1.2. Followership on Social Media Platforms

When social media platforms allow leader-follower interactions, they enable a followership phenomenon which is referred to as information technology enabled (ITE) followership. Followers and leaders are a part of the followership (also referred to as leadership). It is important to note that in contrast to an emphasis on leaders in leadership, followership emphasizes followers. Simply put, followership is the flip side of leadership, the same phenomenon (McCallum, 2013; Tanoff and Barlow, 2002). Followership involves "the characteristics, behaviors and processes of individuals acting in relation to leaders" (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten, 2014, p. 96). The study of followership is important to understanding "the nature and impact of followers and following" in the followership/leadership process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p.89). The followership/leadership process is indicative of a connectionist system. In this system, leader by way of leading and follower by way of following interact with each other (Uhl-

Bien et al., 2014). In ITE followership, the social media platform acts as the connectionist system allowing the followership/leadership process.

By way of interaction, people co-construct the followership/leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Essentially, followers and leaders can be thought to co-create the social reality. For example, it cannot be assumed that people will just follow a leader. On social media platforms, followers choose whom they wish to follow as a byproduct of the social and relational interactions. Studying the followership/leadership process will allow for a better understanding of how people interact and engage with each other on social media platforms. And, it can shed light on the outcomes associated with the process.

The study of followership has another dimension. It enables us to understand the follower's role in relation to the leaders, following behaviors, and outcomes associated with the process. By understanding the follower's role, following behaviors and outcomes associated with the followership/leadership--mutual support and benefit generated--can be understood.

1.3. Business Implications

Understanding the followership on social media platforms may serve businesses well. On these platforms, followers are not an amorphous mass of millions of people. Followers can have unique characteristics and behaviors. Followers can be addressed with highly-targeted segmentation. Products and services can be personalized. Also, informational exchanges can be personalized (e.g., personalized messages and personalized recommendations). They can be efficiently matched with products and

services. Followers can be utilized to improve customer service. Now, with volumes of growing unstructured social media data, businesses can leverage this data to understand followers and gain a competitive advantage. Thus, businesses can understand what followers want; then, products can be marketed, brands can be promoted, and firms can connect with customers and develop relationships. Also, understanding followers is important to understanding social media influencers in social commerce. With a followership theory, businesses can understand, act, and react to activities on these social media platforms. All in all, business interests can be fostered.

1.4. Research Implications

First, this research proposes and theorizes ITE followership on social media platforms. Second, this research provides examples with approaches for examining ITE followership. In Phase I, the focus group research reveals leader-follower interaction, and identifies prominent role-based characteristics and behaviors. In Phase II, the social media analytics divulge the identities--personalities, values, and needs--of followers and leaders. Additionally, in Phase III, the survey-based research gives insights into followers' role-based characteristics and behaviors. Third, by exploring the ITE followership phenomenon, the work here opens a new area for research that can be extended and built with more theorizing and more empirical studies. Also, when theorizing about social media phenomena, this research offers an explanation for the phenomenon.

1.5. Research Objectives

As there are now many social media platforms with large numbers of people engaged in ITE followership, the explication of the phenomenon on social media presents a novel perspective in theorizing and studying social media on information technology platforms. In this research, broadly, the goal is to lay the groundwork for theorizing and studying followership associated with social media platforms. This research focuses on one social media platform--Twitter--and illustrates approaches to research inquiries into ITE followership, and specifically, Twitter followership.

In the literature, when compared to leadership, followership is a relatively neglected topic (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Baker, 2007; Kellerman, 2007). Often, researchers appear to direct their effort to theorizing and studying leadership, the obverse phenomenon. In July 2018, a Google Scholar search for the word leadership found 3,830,000 results, whereas a Google Scholar search for the word followership found only 22,100 results and for the words follower or followers found only 6,640 results. The Google Scholar search results revealed that scholarly interest in followership is negligible compared to leadership. However, followership is equally important as it is an essential and foundational phenomenon on social media platforms such as Twitter.

This research identifies and explores ITE followership, an understudied yet relevant topic, to expand the epistemology associated with social media phenomena. A search of Business Source Complete, a comprehensive business database, reveals 812 articles in academic journals. The keywords included follower and followership in

addition to IT, information technology, and social media. This search was limited to 2007 to 2017 in English language academic journals. Of these 812 articles, after reviewing their abstracts, none were found to explicitly theorize and/or study the phenomenon of ITE followership or followers on social media platforms. In extant literature, the words such as follower, following and followership were discussed (Cha, Haddadi, Benevenuto, and Gummadi, 2010; Tan, Lu, and Tan, 2016). However, the usage of these words only serves as referential syntax (Sul, Dennis, and Yuan, 2017; Hodder and Houghton, 2015). For example, Sul, Dennis, and Yuan (2017) analyzed social media sentiment to predict stock returns, and they referred to followers by specifying the number of followers as a qualifier in the analysis. In some literature, followership is examined as a context in other phenomena (Carlson and Lee, 2015; Bene, 2017). For example, Carlson and Lee (2015) examined the effectiveness of social customer relationship management by studying the receptiveness to marketing messages on social media, and Bene (2017) examined political content in the context of followership. And, in much of the literature, followership is typically studied in organizational contexts, and the definitions of followership and followers are developed in relation to those organizational contexts (Keim, 2013). The research here focuses on ITE followership itself.

By studying and better understanding ITE followership on social media platforms, this research contributes by providing insights on social media phenomena for businesses and offering followership as a perspective for theorizing social media phenomena for researchers. To study and understand ITE followership, an examination of (1) the social

and relational interaction and its byproducts, the outcomes, and (2) the followers' roles and behaviors is essential. This research is undertaken in three phases. In each phase, a larger research question is addressed with one lens and one method. In Phase I and Phase II, ITE followership is examined by applying the constructionist lens. In Phase I, focus group method is used, and in Phase II, a big data method is developed and used. In Phase III, ITE followership is examined by applying the role-based lens using the survey method. The lenses and the methods are detailed in Chapter III and Chapter IV, respectively. The following are the research questions addressed:

Phase I: What is Twitter followership?

Phase II: What are the outcomes associated with Twitter followership?

Phase III: What is the role of the followers in Twitter followership?

In Phase I, to tackle the first research question, Twitter followership is described and explicated. Using focus groups, the phenomenon is conceptualized, and key concepts are isolated as well as some critical assumptions are validated. Focus groups allow for the capture of varied perspectives on the followership phenomenon. By utilizing this generative method, a large breadth of diverse perspectives and Twitter users' experiences were captured. And, by validating the assumptions, the abduction of followership theory from extant literature is justified. With the justification, this research extends and generates followership theory for social media phenomenon.

In Phase II, to tackle the second research question, the outcomes of the ITE followership are examined. The outcomes are the ends that come by way of ITE

followership. There are many ends to study, but due to time constraints, the scope is limited to identity as the outcome of ITE followership. Identity was chosen as it is a functional building block of social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media identity is the "core to many social media platforms" (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 244). The social media identity represents the virtual self on the social media platform. In Phase II, the social media identities, a product of the social and relational interactions on Twitter, are described.

In Phase III, to tackle the third research question, the followers' role in ITE followership is studied by examining the followers' characteristics and their behaviors. There are many ways to explore followers' role. The scope here is limited to the followers' characteristics and followers' behaviors to study followers' role. Taking the insights from the focus groups on key characteristics and behaviors of the followers, a survey instrument was developed. Then, by administering a survey, data was collected from followers regarding their characteristics and behaviors on Twitter.

Beyond characteristics and behaviors, there are other aspects of the role to study, but I limit to only the characteristics and behaviors to illustrate an approach to studying the followers' role. Also, note that there are many roles, characteristics and behaviors to explore. Taking the insights from the focus groups and focusing on key characteristics and behaviors of followers, a survey instrument was developed. Data was collected from followers regarding their characteristics and behaviors on Twitter.

Each of these research questions deserves extensive discourse and several studies to explore in-depth. By illustrating the three approaches here for conducting research on ITE followership on social media platforms, this research attempts to provide a few directions for future research on ITE followership on social media platforms.

This dissertation is structured as follows. First, a literature review of social media platforms and followership is presented. Second, the theoretical foundations for the research are outlined with a discussion of followership lenses and essential concepts. Third, the methodological approaches used in each phase of this research are explained. Fourth, results are presented followed by discussion. Finally, the contributions, the limitations, and the future research opportunities are described followed by a conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media Platforms

Social media is "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). There are many types of social media: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media is delivered on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. Some social media platforms, such as Twitter, enable a social broadcasting environment. Here, the platforms have an information technology infrastructure that supports a broadcasting service along with a social networking service (Shi, Rui, and Whinston, 2014). The broadcasting service allows for mass distribution of content. In addition, the social networking service allows people to build social networks and social relations with each other.

2.1.1. Twitter

Twitter is a prominent social media platform used by millions of active users for online social interactions and relationships. It is a "micro blogging application that allows sending out short, text-based posts of 140 characters or less" called tweets (Kaplan and

Haenlein, 2010, p. 67). Also, note that in November 2017, Twitter updated the maximum character count to 280. At times, tweets are embedded with pictures. And, users can engage in retweeting (sharing the tweet with others), hash tagging, liking, and other behaviors afforded by Twitter. On Twitter, users (and other entities such as companies) can follow and be followed. As a follower on Twitter, the user receives tweets from those whom the user follows. The relationship between the follower and the followed can be bidirectional (e.g., friendship) or unidirectional (e.g., followership) social links.

2.2. Followership Perspective

Social media platforms such as Twitter enable a phenomenon of followership. Millions of people follow and are followed. According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), "[l]eadership cannot be fully understood without considering how followers and followership contribute to (or detract from) the leadership process" (p. 89). So, on social media platforms, the understanding of leadership is incomplete without an understanding of followership. Again, followership and leadership are the same phenomenon, but in followership, the emphasis is on the followers. Without followers, there are no leaders. And, if followership exists on Twitter, leadership must exist on Twitter, and the process of followership/leadership can be assumed to be present on the social media platform.

Followership must be theorized, and followership constructs must be identified and placed in context of followership theory on social media platforms. In this research, the followership perspective is deemed appropriate for studying social media contexts, where the dominant syntax is followers, following, and followed by. In contrast, the

syntax is not leader, leading, and led by on social media platforms. This basic point serves to highlight the importance of studying followership on social media platforms.

As discussed in the introduction (Chapter I), there is a dearth of followership literature. Only recently has there been an increasing interest in the topic of followership (Kelley, 1988; Bligh, 2011). The extant literature predominantly has focused on leadership, and the limited followership literature has predominantly been contextualized to organizations. There is of lack followership literature in the context of social media platforms. None of the extant followership literature has explicitly theorized ITE followership and its constructs in social media contexts. Again, by theorizing ITE followership, the following is implied: an investigation is undertaken to understand the nature and impact of followers and following in the followership/leadership process on social media platforms (adapted from Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

2.3. Early Followership Literature

In recent years, a few scholars have studied followership. In extant followership literature, there are varied perspectives on followership and the definitions of followers. Some scholars directed their efforts to expand followership research in organizational contexts. A summary of prominent followership literature is presented here. Later in this chapter, this followership literature is placed in the context of ITE followership, specifically Twitter followership.

In possibly the earliest literature, Barnard (1938) proposed a theory of cooperation and organization. In formal organizations, he studied the functions and the methods of

operation for executives. He presented followers as independent actors with self-interests supporting the mission and the leader. Barnard (1938) alluded to the employee-employer dynamic as a leader-follower relationship.

In 1978, Burns introduced the concept of followership. His views transcend the typical transactionary view of the past with a relational approach to leadership. In the relational view of leadership, individuals complete the transactions in a buyer-seller exchange. However, Burns saw that both the leader and the follower make a conscious choice, and they work and grow together. Thus, Burns established the idea of the power of followers in relation to leaders, which had been absent in prior literature. The idea of follower power is further supported in works by Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1977) and Fiedler (1964, 1971). They proposed that leaders adjust their leadership styles depending on the situational needs of the environment and the followers. However, here, independence of followers has been neglected unlike in Barnard (1938). Nonetheless, the leader must adapt to the situation, and the situation is implicitly orchestrated by the followers. In other literature, Greenleaf (1970, 1977) conceptualized the leader as a servant rather than as a dominator. Again, in this view, the followers are served by their leaders, but followers have considerations; therefore, they have power. Even though the literature highlights the significance of followers and followership in organizational contexts, it is unequivocally leader-centric.

Heifetz (1998) presented the idea of adaptive work. He made a distinction in the types of work organizations do. Work is needed for technical fixes and for adaptive

challenges. Keim (2012) summarized the problem and the work that is needed for the technical fixes and the adaptive challenges with the following statement:

> The common metaphor portrays adaptive problems as "clouds" in contrast to technical problems, which are seen as "clocks." You fix clocks; you cannot fix clouds—sometimes you cannot even get your hands around them. Technical fixes are relatively easy—a clock can be repaired. Adaptive challenges are more complex; it is impossible to "repair" a "cloud" and in that sense, there is most likely not one correct answer but a series of possibilities and experiments to be considered in order to get your arms around the cloud. (p. 5)

Adaptive work presents a dilemma. As the work poses an adaptive challenge, the problems require learning, the locust of work shifts to the shareholders, and the work becomes experimental and risky (Heifetz, 2003). "Leaders who truly care for their followers expose them to the painful reality of their condition and demand that they fashion a response" (Heifetz and Laurie, 1997, p. 1). With these ideas, Heifetz challenges the traditional views on leader-follower relationships. In the traditional sense, work is for technical fixes. For a technical fix, the problems and solution are clear, the locus of work is with the authority, and the work is optimized for execution (Heifetz, 2003). However, the solutions for the adaptive challenges are not with executives; as they reside in the employees' collective intelligence across all levels of the organization (Heifetz, 2003). That is, for an organization to address an adaptive challenge, the followers need to adapt. Adaptive work requires a change in values, beliefs, and/or behavior (Heifetz, 1994). It requires the followers to deal with the painful reality of their condition and respond (Heifetz, 2003). Therefore, adaptive work requires shifts in the followers' and

followership's values, beliefs, and/or behavior. If the followers' values, beliefs, and/or behavior do not change, the organization risks extinction. Adaptive work serves as a strong rational for the contemporary concept of followership as it serves to emphasize the importance of followers and followership in work to address adaptive challenges in organizations.

2.4. Contemporary Followership Literature

In contemporary followership literature, Zaleznik, Kelley, Chaleff, and Kellerman paved the way by theorizing followership. In 1965, Zaleznik theorized the subordinate roles of followers across active and passive patterns of behavior. In 1988, Kelley's work, "In Praise of Followers" brought followers and followership to the mainstream discussion receiving wide attention from academics and the press (Baker, 2007). Kelley framed followers with independence and engagement in organizational success (Baker, 2007; Keim, 2012). In 1995, Chaleff proposed the idea of courageous followers supporting their leaders and rejected the idea of followers as passive subordinates (Baker, 2007; Keim, 2012). The works by Kelley (1988) and Chaleff (1995) serve as seminal texts, and they have led to subsequent discussions on contemporary followership, where followers are more than subordinates (Baker, 2007). In more recent literature, Kellerman expanded on the idea of effective follower engagement. She introduced the idea of good and bad followership. Drawing from history, Kellerman (2008) proposed that shifts in power from leaders to followers are ongoing and imminent due to changes in culture and technology.

The shifts in power are changing the patterns of engagement, dominance, and deference among followers and leaders.

2.4.1. Zaleznik's Perspective

Typically, in the discussions on contemporary followership, theorists and researchers do not look back to literature prior to Kelley's work in 1988 (Baker, 2007). Here, Zaleznik's work is included for a more complete view of contemporary followership literature. Present research does not take an affective stance on subordinacy, a topic associated with Zalezink's work. Also, present research does not consider Heifest's (2007) and Rost's (2008) conceptualization of subordinacy in which they view the leader-follower dichotomy to be demeaning to followers (Keim, 2012). Present research views subordinacy as another dimension of followership.

Zaleznik (1965) defined followers by their subordinacy. He developed a categorization of followers based on the two dimensions of submission/control and activity/passivity in patterns of behavior. According to Zaleznik (1965), along the dimensions of submission and control, individuals balance their wishes to be controlling and their wishes to be controlled. Along the dimensions of active and passive patterns of behaviors, individuals balance the active patterns of behavior by initiating and intruding and the passive patterns of behavior by waiting for the initiations and responding to external stimulus.

Zaleznik's followers are categorized as impulsive, compulsive, masochistic, and withdrawn (Zaleznik, 1965). Zalezink's followers are summarized below, and the

categorization is illustrated in Figure 1. The impulsive followers wish to dominate their relationships with authority and actively engage in rebellious behavior. These followers exhibit courage. The compulsive followers wish to dominate their relationships with authority, but they do this by passive means. These followers exhibit a sense of guilt about their tendencies. The masochistic followers wish to submit to the control of authority, and they actively seek pleasure though pain. These followers are self-destructive. Finally, the withdrawn followers orient with passive submission. These followers do not care about what happens at work and do the bare minimum to keep their job.

Zaleznik drew from the Freudian view of the world. At the contemporary academy, his work might be considered old-style and outdated due to its psychodynamic innerworkings. On social media platforms, the psychodynamics developed by Zaleznik do not contradict the views exposed in this research. On social media platforms such as Twitter, followers have active patterns of behavior (e.g., tweeting) and they have passive patterns of behavior (e.g., reading tweets). On Twitter, it is entirely possible that people wish to be controlling and to be controlled. The direct application of Zaleznik's psychodynamics to Twitter followership is unlikely as his work is contextualized to employees in organizations. However, psychodynamics have utility in understanding the ideas of dominance/submission and the active/passive patterns of behavior on Twitter.

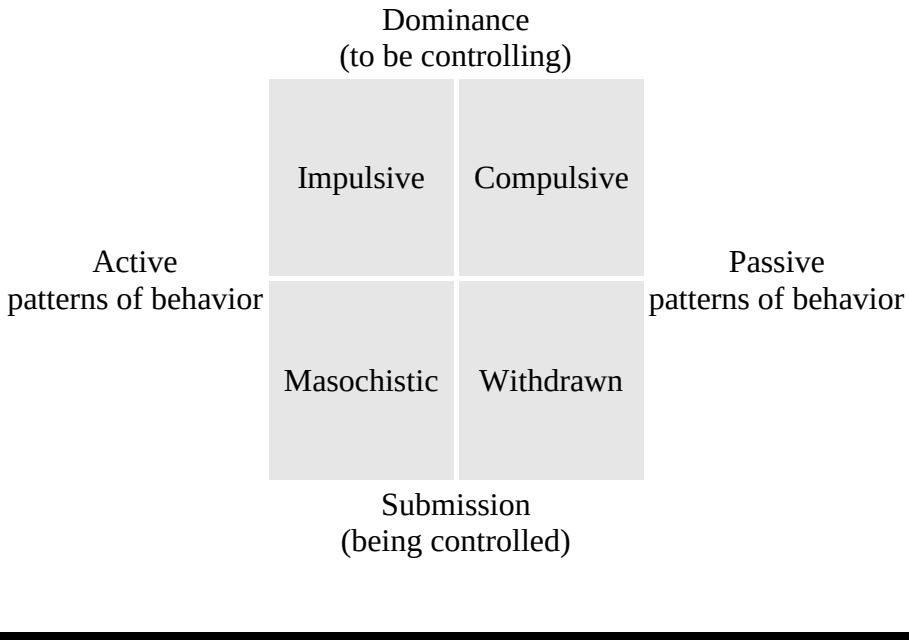

Figure 1. Zaleznik's Follower Categorization

Source: Zaleznik, A. (1965). The dynamics of subordinacy. *Harvard Business Review*, 43(3), 119–131.

2.4.2. Kelley's Perspective

In 1988, Kelley popularized followership (Baker, 2007; Crossman & Crossman; 2012). In Kelley's (1988) seminal text, he describes followers as below:

> People who are effective in the follower role have the vision to see both the forest and the trees, the social capacity to work well with others, the strength of character to flourish without heroic status, the moral and psychological balance to pursue personal and corporate goals at no cost to others, and, above all, the desire to participate in a team effort for the accomplishment of some greater common purpose. (p. 7)

Kelley (1988, 1992, 2008) introduced the idea of effectiveness of followers and following. He proposed that subordinates are not innately effective at following. The followers must accept their role and perform it effectively. Kelley considers followers as having independence and the ability to exercise critical thinking. And, their active engagement serves a role in organizational success.

Kelley (2008) categorized followers based on their independence/critical thinking and their active/passive engagement. Kelley (2008) characterized followers in five categories: sheep, yes-people/conformists, alienated, survivors/pragmatics, and effective/exemplary/star followers. Kelley's categorization of followers is summarized below, and it is illustrated in Figure 2. Kelley (2008) described the followers in each category. The sheep are passive followers. They depend on the leader for thinking and motivation. They need the leader to get things done. The yes-people/conformists also depend on the leader for thinking, direction, and vision. However, the yes-people/ conformists are doers, and these followers move forward with the doing unlike the sheep. Alienated followers are passive, and they think for themselves. These followers tend to have negative energy, and they are skeptical and cynical. Survivors/pragmatics sit on the fence and act accordingly. The survivors/pragmatics focus on survival, and they strive to preserve the status quo. Lastly, the effective/exemplary/star followers are active, and they have their own independent evaluation of the leader's decisions. They tend to be positive, but they also tend to challenge the leader by offering constructive alternatives.

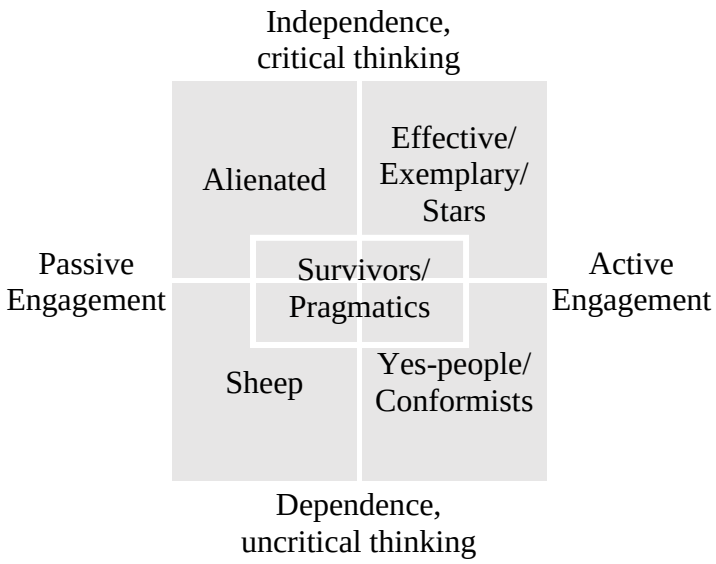

Figure 2. Kelley's Follower Categorization

Source: Kelley, R. E. (1988). In praise of followers. *Harvard Business Review, 66*(6), 142-148.

Kelley's categorization of followers is contextualized to organizations, where followers are employees. On social media platforms, Kelley's categorization is unlikely to fit definitionally, but the underlying principles offer insights into theorizing ITE followership. Kelley's work serves as a step towards a better understanding of the passive and active engagement and the independence and dependence of Twitter followers. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Twitter followers can be considered based on their active/passive engagement and independence/dependence. As in Zaleznik's view of followers, there are active and passive patterns of behaviors on Twitter. Here, these

behaviors are in the form of engagements. On Twitter, it is entirely possible some people are independent while others are dependent. Some followers are critical of tweets from those they follow, and some followers are uncritical of tweets and blindly support them with likes. And, it is also not unreasonable to suggest that sheep, yes-people/conformists, alienated, survivors/pragmatics, and effective/exemplary/star followers exist on this platform. However, their definitional manifestations may vary.

2.4.3. Chaleff's Perspective

Chaleff (1995, 2009) defined followers by their courage. The courageous followers stand up to and support the leaders. Followers have the courage to assume responsibility, to serve, to challenge, to participate in transformation, and to take moral action in organizations. Chaleff does not see followers as those serving the leader. The followers share a common purpose with the leader, align with the mission of the organization, and want the organization and the leader to succeed. Both followers and leaders are viewed as being responsible for their actions. Chaleff's followers share equal responsibility with the leader in the success of the organization with their actions. Therefore, both leaders and followers are accountable. Note, Chaleff does recognize that the final say rests with the formal leadership. Chaleff's views align with Kelley's in rejecting the idea of passive, subordinate followers.

Chaleff categorizes followers by their courage to challenge the leaders and to support the leaders. Chaleff's categorization of followers is summarized below, and it is illustrated in Figure 3. The resources are obedient orderlies who do what is asked of

them. They lack the courage to challenge or support the leader. The individualists are those who have the courage to challenge the leaders. But, these followers are those who do what they want, and they think for themselves. The implementers are those who are the doers who support the leaders by taking orders and completing them without challenging the leaders. Finally, the partners are those who see themselves as equals to the leader providing not only support but also the necessary challenge.

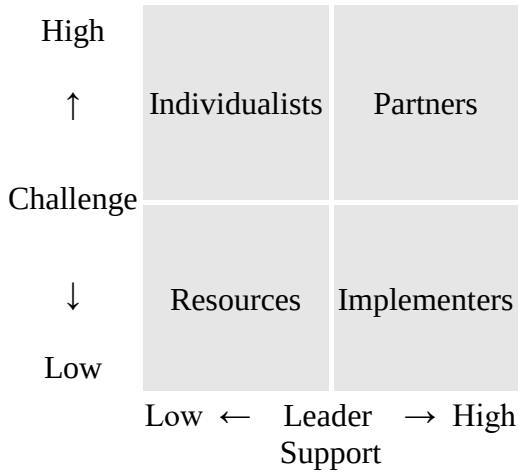

Figure 3. Chaleff's Follower Categorization

Source: Chaleff, I. (2008). Creating new ways of following. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 67-87). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Chaleff's courageous followers have a place in followership phenomenon associated with social media platforms. When looking back at the origins of Chaleff's

courageous follower, he considers the aspects associated with the courageous follower as those concerned with preventing the abuse of power. He points to proximity and control as critically important to the maintenance of balance of power. A social media platform such as Twitter changes the nature of proximity and control as it transforms the interactions between followers and leaders. However, the threat of abuse of power remains. And, this research takes the stance that courage is necessary, and that followers can contribute by challenging and supporting leaders on social media platforms. On Twitter, some courageously tweet in objection to and voice their opinions of others' tweets, while there are those who courageously support and agree with others' tweets. It does not matter if their challenging and supporting behaviors are right or wrong ways to interact. It is more important to understand that in both forms of behavior, Twitter followers exhibit courage.

2.4.4. Kellerman's Perspective

Kellerman (2007, 2008) defined followers by their engagement. She expanded beyond Kelley's passive and active engagement, and she categorized followers along multiple levels of engagement. Kellerman's categorization of followers is summarized below, and it is illustrated in Figure 4. She categorized followers as isolates, bystanders, participants, activists, and diehards. These categories range from low engagement with isolates who are not doing much, to high engagement with diehards who are deeply involved and committed. The isolates are the detached and disinterested, and they strive for the status quo. The bystanders are those who choose to stand by and watch from the

sidelines and offer little support. The participants are those who try to make an impact, usually in support of the leaders. The activists are those who are eager, energetic, and dedicated to their cause. And, the diehards are those who give their all-encompassing commitment.

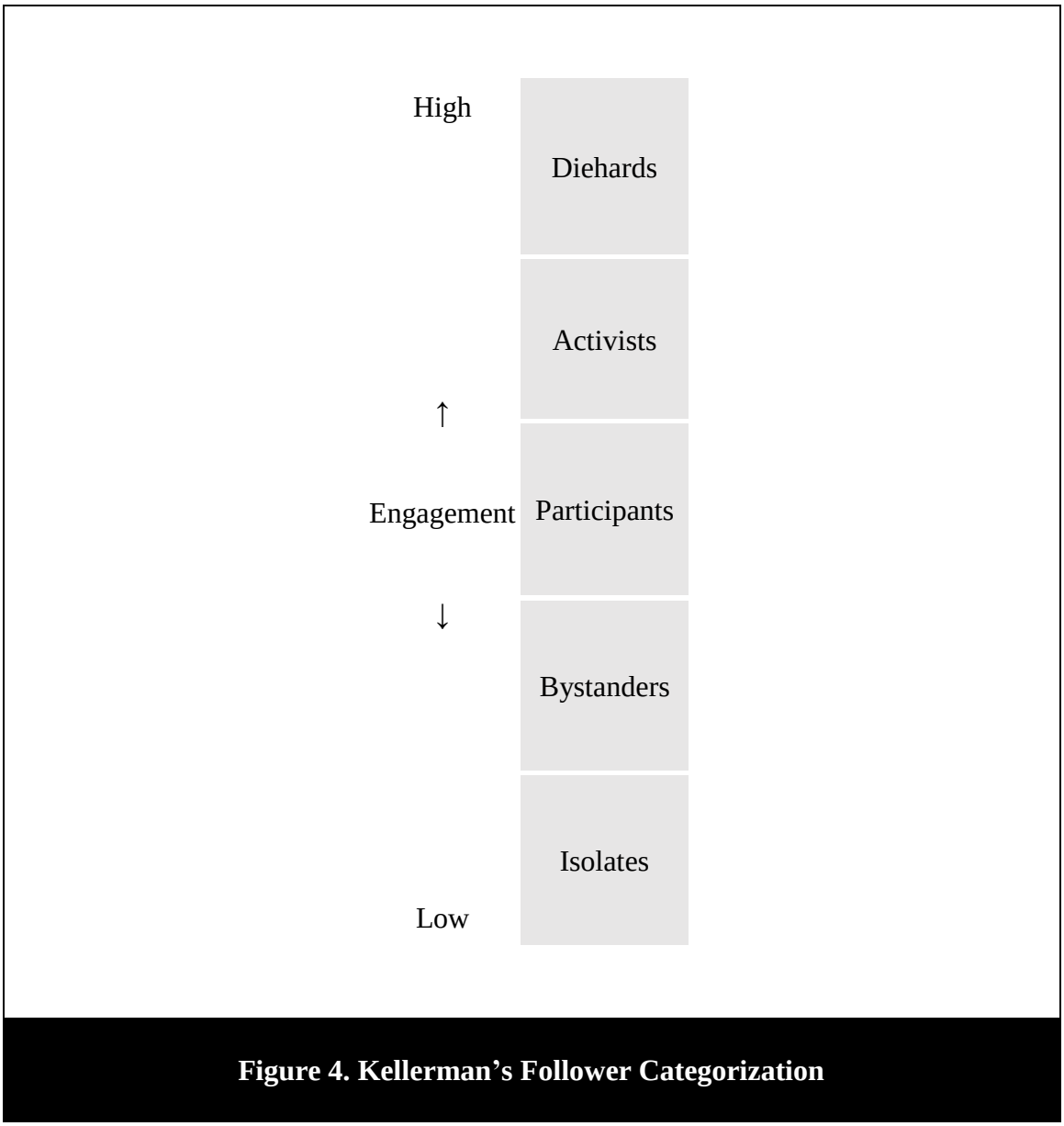

Figure 4. Kellerman's Follower Categorization

Kellerman (2008), troubled by ideas in Milgram's experiment and its implications concerning Hitler's followers, differentiated between good and bad followers. From Kellerman's perspective, Nazi Germany did not have only bystanders, and she proposed that Nazi Germany had participants, activists, and diehards for and against Hitler. Kellerman asked, "Where does this leave us? If Participants, Activists, and Diehards are in and of themselves neutral, value free, how do we distinguish good followers from bad ones?" (Kellerman, 2007, p. 229). Kellerman sees no single answer, and she points to beliefs, fundamental values, and opinions of the leader and the followers in particular situations (Kellerman, 2007). Good followers are those who actively support good leaders who are effective and ethical leaders, and they respond and check bad leaders (Kellerman, 2007). Bad followers are those who oppose a good leader and do not do much (Kellerman, 2007).

Also, Kellerman (2013), in "The End of Leadership," proposed shifting trends in dominance and deference. Drawing from history, she explained that at one point in time, people blindly obeyed orders issued by superiors, and now, people are more likely to challenge their superiors with the spread of democracy worldwide, with the rhetoric of empowerment, and with the practice of participation (Kellerman, 2013). With current trends in culture and advances in technology, she sees rapid changes coming to the patterns of dominance and deference. Kellerman (2013) wrote the following about these changes:

> Social media enable the spread of information. And they provide a means of expression. And they give the capacity for connection. Think of social media as an open resource, available to most anyone, which empowers most anyone in ways that historically are unprecedented. The so-called Arab Spring is just one of the many glaring examples of what can happen when social media enable those without any apparent power, authority, or influence to undercut the existing social contract – to unceremoniously dump the old guard in favor of the young and restless, who are armed with little more than a smartphone. Put directly, as leaders worldwide are beginning to discover, information, expression, and connection can be a combustible mix in which the outcome is action. (p. 138)

The present research aligns and agrees with Kellerman's views. Twitter started in 2006, and in little over a decade, it has transformed how people fundamentally spread information, express themselves, and communicate with each other. Now, tweets are part of the common parlance. With modern communication technologies, there are fundamental shifts in patterns of dominance and deference. These shifts are imminent as changes continue in culture and technology. The present research also agrees with Kellerman's (2012, 2013) notion that in our times, leaders are generally losing power and influence, and the followers are generally gaining power and influence. Therefore, it is erroneous to obsess over leaders, and it is shortsighted to ignore followers.

2.5. Other Followership Literature

2.5.1. Thody's Perspective

Thody developed a lexicon for followership regarding follower behaviors and the roles they adopt in educational organizations (Thody, 2003; Crossman and Crossman, 2011). Note that the Thody lexicon is only for effective behaviors and associated roles in

educational organizations. She categorized follower behaviors and the roles as positive and negative. She identified the following as positive effective behaviors: independent, passive-active, entrepreneurial, loyalist, exemplary/exceptional, interdependent, and transactional. And, she identified the following as positive effective roles: coordinator, mentee/apprentice, disciple, gatekeeper-filter, partner/comrade, toxic handler, second-in-command, rescuer, muse, and resnatronic. Negative effective behaviors are the following: alienate, isolate, passive, dependent, observe, reluctant-resistance, sheep, plateau, Machiavellian, survive, and sycophantic. And, negative effective roles are communication distorters, saboteurs, and toxic creators. (For details on each behavior and role, see Thody (2003) and Crossman and Crossman (2011).)

On social media platforms, followers exhibit both effective positive and effective negative behaviors and roles. On Twitter, negative effective behaviors and roles can manifest in cyberbullying. And, the positive effective behaviors and roles can manifest in simple ways such as liking a tweet in support of good causes. Hence, Twitter behaviors and roles can be effective, and Twitter followership is better understood by separating and distinguishing between effective positive and effective negative behaviors and roles.

2.5.2. Adair's Perspective

Adair (2008) also proposed a categorization of followers. The basis for his categorization is how followers see themselves in organizations. He categorized followers who exist within an organization based on job satisfaction and turnover intention. His categorization also provides insights into the productiveness of employees.

Adair's categorization of followers is summarized below and illustrated in Figure 5. The details on each category of followers can be found in his work (Adair, 2008).

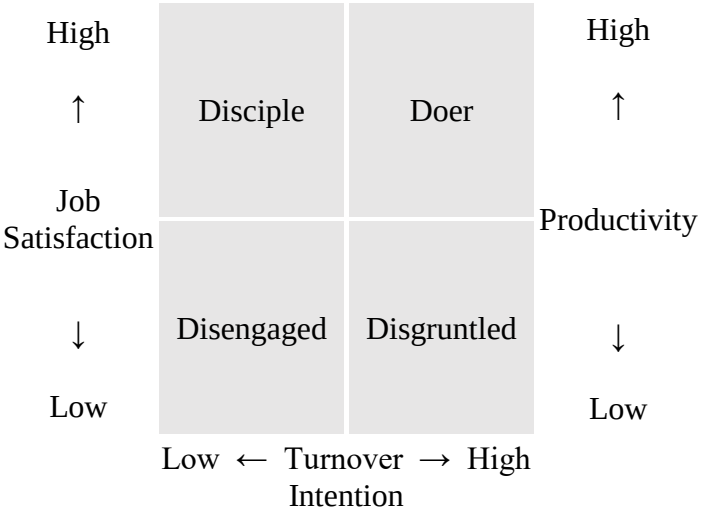

Figure 5. Adair's Follower Categorization

Source: Adair, R. (2008). Developing great leaders, one follower at a time. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 137–153). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

On Twitter, followers could possibly identify themselves as disengaged, disgruntled, disciple, or doer. As with any organizational framework, a direct application of Adair's framework to Twitter followership is not appropriate. Adair's criteria for categorization may not be suitable for all social media phenomena. Job satisfaction and turnover intention are not common constructs associated with social media phenomena.

Perhaps, on some social media platforms such as LinkedIn, these constructs might have a place in understanding followership. On Twitter, only constructs such as user satisfaction and unfollowing intention are suited for a discussion of followership. However, on Twitter, as postulated in Adair's work, learning how the followers see themselves can be revelatory.

2.6. Information Technology Enabled (ITE) Followership

An important take away from the contemporary works above, in organizations, is that followers are complex. By extension, on social media platforms, ITE followership (Twitter followership) is equally complex. Each information technology platform presents a different social media context, and each platform has the potential to manifest in a unique and complex followership phenomenon.

Followership is an important aspect of an information technology platform such as Twitter where it is the ontology; that is, the nature of its existence. The Twitter platform exists to facilitate followership. The platform creates the phenomenon of ITE followership. These information technology platforms can be best understood by understanding the followership associated with them.

This research argues that ITE followership is different from followership in organizations. Unlike in organizations where followers are employees and subordinates, on social media platforms, the information technology enables networks of followers. The networks of followers are involved in generating social media phenomena. ITE followership platforms change what it means to be a follower. A follower on Twitter is

unlike a follower in an organization. On Twitter, the followers are geographically dispersed. And, in real time, they can participate, and they can act on their view with a tweet or other behaviors afforded by Twitter.

For example, in traditional followership (followership which is not on an information technology platform), if a person is a follower of a political candidate such as Donald Trump or Hilary Clinton, the person might physically follow and physically interact with them (e.g., attending speeches and rallies). Taking in media to view, listen to, and/or read about these candidates would not make a person a follower; people engaging in these actions would simply be viewers, listeners, readers, and subscribers of the political candidate. Social media platforms offer a radical novelty; "they fulfill a given function by using a different basic principle as compared to what was used before to achieve a similar purpose" (Rotolo, Hicks, and Martin., 2015, p. 20). Twitter, for instance, fulfills its function by allowing the phenomenon of following without the limiting aspects such as lack of physical proximity. Unlike ever before in history, people can follow digitally (that is, regardless of physical proximity) using the social media platforms.

2.6.1 Democratization and Social Media Platforms

Literature has supported that social media platforms play a critical role in the democratization of communication and information access. Social media platforms are uniquely interactive, social mediums. Individuals need not invest huge capital to create and exchange content as large corporations and news organizations do (Carruther and

Ballsun-Stanton, 2010). Ideas and usage can go "viral" (Carruther & Ballsun-Stanton, 2010). Social media platforms amplify the reach of the information and can influence the masses (Small, 2012). In other words, "[t]he power of a single user is magnified by the power of their network plus their network's network" (Carruther & Ballsun-Stanton, 2010, p. 167). Social media allows for non-localized proximity (Carruther & Ballsun-Stanton, 2010). They allow for direct communication between leaders and followers without alteration to the information at the end run. Social media complements other media such as TV, radio, and websites. Social media is generated in sync with journalists, the traditional curators of information. Social media is ubiquitous and immediately accessible without wait (Abbott, 2011), and the information is free. Some social media platforms such as Twitter are akin to a broadcast medium (Cha et al., 2012). By allowing the democratization of communication and information access, social media platforms enable shifts in the power from agents with authority to agents with authenticity and from leader to followers.

2.6.2. Follower Power

Due to democratization of communication and information access, this research assumes followers have power. For example, Twitter empowers followers with improved communication and with information. Twitter is different from other broadcasting environments (e.g. TV and radio). TV has viewers, and these are not the same as followers. Radio has listener, and these are not the same as followers. On Twitter,

followers can choose to follow or to unfollow, and they have power to choose their level and directionality of involvement.

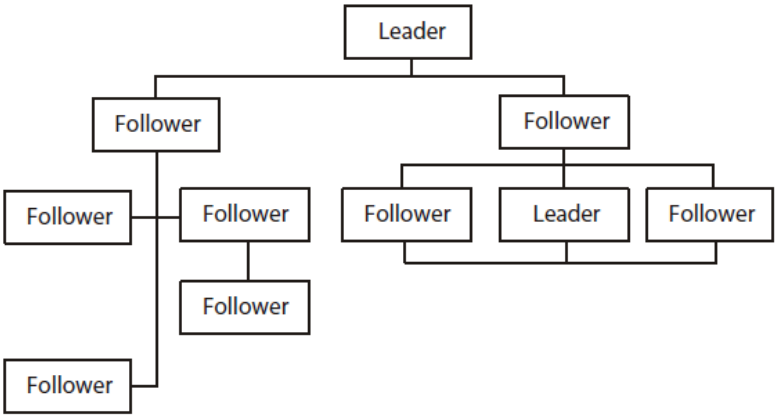

Figure 6. Traditional Leader-Follower Hierarchy

Source: Dixon, G., & Westbrook, J. (2003). Followers revealed. *Engineering Management Journal*, *15*(1), 19–26.

The designation of a follower carries with it a negative connotation. This stems from the hierarchical view that followers are "below" the leader in the hierarchy (Figure 6). However, an alternate view of conceptualizing leader-follower hierarchy proposes that people are both leaders and followers (Figure 7). In this view, followership is relevant to all involved in the leadership process because people can be both leaders and followers. This view is applicable on social media platforms. On social media platforms, leaders can be followers and followers can be leaders. People have power in both roles.

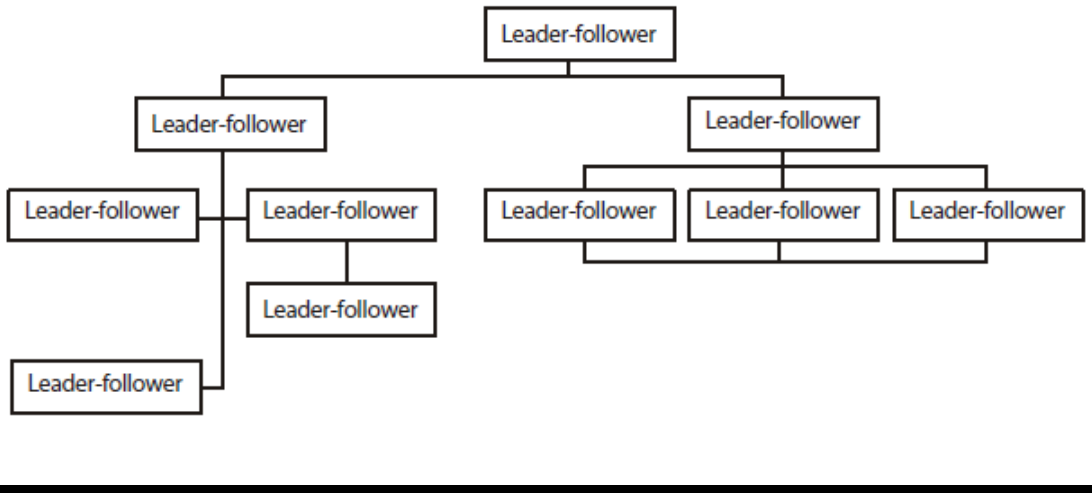

Figure 7. Reconceptualized Leader-Follower Hierarchy

Source: Dixon, G., & Westbrook, J. (2003). Followers revealed. *Engineering Management Journal*, *15*(1), 19–26.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Taking an innovative stance, this research moves away from the leadership research that is leader-centric and emphasizes follower centrism instead in leadership research. As it is defined in Chapter II, the followership research in this study investigates the nature and impact of followers and following in the followership/leadership process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Researchers have studied followers and followership through multiple lenses in extant literature. After reviewing the extant literature, Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) proposed a formal followership theory and summarized the broad followership research approaches as either constructionist or role-based. According to Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), the two lenses, constructionist and role-based, capture all of the perspectives in followership research. As the research inquiries here fit the definition of formal followership theory, this research applies both the constructionist and the role-based lenses in examining ITE followership; specifically, Twitter followership.

In Phase I and II of this research, two inquiries were made on Twitter followership, and this followership research is approached through the constructionist lens. In Phase III of this research, an additional inquiry was made into Twitter followership, and this one inquiry was approached through the role-based lens.

The theoretical foundations chapter is organized as follows. The lenses applied in extant research for viewing followers and followership are outlined and explained. The applications of the lenses in the purview of ITE followership--Twitter followership--are discussed. The formal theory of followership proposed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) is presented, and it is explicated. The necessary assumptions to abduct the formal theory of followership for social media phenomenon are discussed. And, the key concepts associated with the research and empirical studies undertaken in all of the phases of this research are detailed.

3.1. Followers and Followership in Research

In extant research, followers and followership have been viewed through the following lenses: leader-centric, follower-centric, relational, role-based, and constructionist (Uhl-Bien et al, 2014). The perspectives offered by the lenses are detailed in Figure 8. As mentioned above, this research considers followers and followership through only two lenses, constructionist and role-based, in accordance with the formal followership theory. This research agrees with Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), and it scopes research here by limiting the view to these two lenses for followership research (as defined by the formal followership theory). Therefore, here, the constructionist and the role-based lenses serve as the fundamental theoretical foundations for followership research. However, a summary of all of the lenses is provided below.

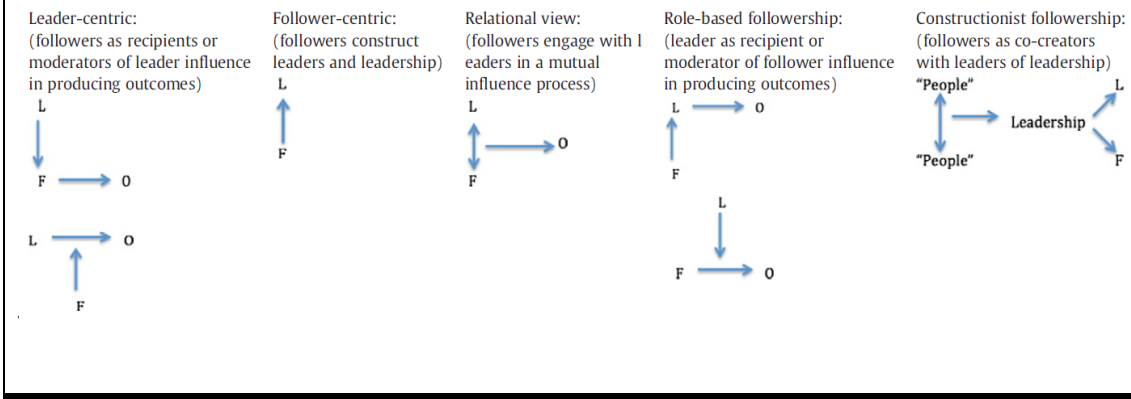

Figure 8. Treatment of Followers in Leadership Research

Reprinted from The Leadership Quarterly, Vol. 25, Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B., & Carsten, M. K., Followership theory: A review and research agenda, Pages No. 83-104, Copyright (2013), with permission from Elsevier.

3.1.1. Leader-centric Lens

In research conducted with the leader-centric lens, followers are seen as recipients or moderators of the leader's influence in producing outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) identify and attribute the leader-centric roots to Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management. From Taylor's scientific management perspective, in a hierarchical sense, managers are superiors to employees, the followers. At the highest capacity, the inferior employees are subordinates moderating the leader's influence, and at the lowest capacity, they are recipients who require direction and control. Viewed through the leader-centric lens, social media influencers would be the superiors with their massive influence, and their followers would be their subordinates who are tuned-in and

are mutable with their limited influence. The leader-centric lens may serve a purpose in understanding social media influencers, but there is more depth to research on ITE followership than just the social media influencers at the center of the social media phenomena.

Also, on social media platforms, note that the leader-centric lens may offer an unreasonable view in some cases such as followers being considered the subordinates. On social media platforms, followers are not employees who have given up their agency by contracting with an organization for employment, and they are not really under the directive of the organization and its leaders. Linguistically, the difference between employees and social media followers is clear and can be substantiated. For example, on social media platforms such as Twitter, people do not discuss leaders as those leading their followers; rather these leaders are simply presumed to have the followers.

3.1.2. Follower-centric Lens

In research in response to leader-centric approaches, the follower-centric lens came in with a contrasting narrative. With the follower-centric lens, the followers were seen as the constructors of leadership, so leadership was seen as a social construction (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). With the follower-centric lens, leaders emerge from the follower processes such as cognition, attribution, and social identification (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The follower-centric lens emphasizes the importance of followers as they are the ones constructing the leadership. That is, all of us, as the followers of something, are the ones constructing that thing.

The follower-centric lens offers theorizing follower-oriented concepts such as "romance of leadership" by Meindl (1990) and Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich (1985) where followers engage in social construction in which social cognition at the collective level imbues the leader with attributes such as charisma as the group is strives toward a common goal. In other works, employing the follower-centric lens, researchers have formulated implicit leadership theories. In implicit leadership research, followers' internal beliefs and schemas are thought to encode the leadership information. With the implicit leadership theorizing, the followers are the ones imbuing the leader with attributes and the ones encoding the leadership information. A main difference between the leader-centric and the follower-centric lenses is the directionality of the influence. With the follower-centric lens, the influence inverts from the leader-centric lens where the leader has the attributes such as being charismatic and being the one encoding the leadership information. With the follower-centric lens, followers are the ones attributing and encoding the leadership information with their personal, internal beliefs and schemas (Uhl-Bien et al, 2014).

The follower-centric lens is essential in followership research. On social media platforms, due to the inseparable nature of ITE followership from the platforms such as Twitter and the relevance of trends in democratization of communication and information access for the followers and their power, the follower-centric lens becomes ever more important in viewing followership as the directionality of the influence shifts to the

followers on these platforms in perpetuity. The follower-centric lens allows researchers to view the leadership from followers' point of view or, in other words, the followership.

3.1.3. Relational Lens

The relational lens, unlike the leader-centric and the follower-centric lenses, considers the reciprocity in the relationships between leaders and followers (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Hollander, 1958). Looking through the relational lens, leadership is a process of mutual influence between the leaders and the followers (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The relational lens expands on the leader-centric lens by offering a view of leadership as a co-constructed process that happened by way of the interactions between the leaders and the followers.

Viewing through this lens, theories such as Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) consider leaders and followers in transactional or exchange-oriented terms (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). On social media platforms, the relational lens lends itself to viewing ITE followership as a mutually influential relationship between the leaders and their followers and as a co-created process.

3.1.3.1. Connectionist System

Viewing through the relational lens, leadership is seen as a process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The notion of a process is an indication of a connectionist system (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Lord and Brown, 2001). In this system, the leadership process has followers engaging and influencing the leader by following and vice versa, the leader engaging and

influencing the followers by leading. Due to the nature of the reciprocity and the bi-directional causality as seen through the relational lens, the connectionist system is supported. In addition, leadership is seen as a system with a social process between the leaders/followers, and the leader and follower are seen as having a rank or position (e.g., role) in the system.

The social media platform is also a system. Therefore, the relational lens lends itself to viewing the social media platform as a leadership system. The platform as a system allows leadership to be enabled by facilitating the processes involved in leadership as a system. And, the platform situates followers and leaders in a rank or position (e.g., role).

The social media platforms and the ensuing leadership lend themselves for a better understanding as connectionist systems with the relational lens. The connectionist networks supported by social media platforms and ITE followership by way of leadership as a social process and the followers and leaders both having ranks or positions (e.g., roles) allow for research inquiries into these systems through the relational lens. By extension, due to the nature of reciprocity on social media platforms, this notion of a connectionist system can be applied not only to leadership but also to followership and followers on the social media platforms. Therefore, followership is a system on the social media platforms with a social process and the followers and leaders have ranks and positions (e.g., roles).

3.1.3.1.1. Human Information Processing

Miller theorized information processing. His seminal work led to the information processing theory (Miller, 1956). This theory likened a person's mind to a computer. That is, a person's mind uses a computer-like information processing model whereby "it takes in information, performs operations on it to change its form and content, stores and locates it and generates responses to it" (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 250). "Thus, processing involves gathering and representing information, or encoding; holding information or retention; and getting at the information when needed, or retrieval" (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 241).

Lord (1985) applied the information processing theory to leadership. According to the information processing approach to leadership, "leaders seeking to create identities are constrained by the evaluations of followers" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 88). And, the process of identity creation can be viewed as an intricately related mutual influence process (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This notion of reciprocity of influence is acknowledged in the leaders' and followers' influence on the other's self-schema, both individually and collectively ((Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The behavior is "the product of a parallel constraint or of a connectionist network" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014)

In applying this concept to ITE followership, followers and leaders would be viewed as processing information on a social media platform. Also, the information processing that occurs on a social media platform among individuals creates the

followership/leadership. And, the behavior is the product of constraints or of a connectionist network afforded by the social media platform.

3.1.3.1.2. Information Processing as Social Cognition

The cognition of the individuals processing the information and the group processing the information is liminal. Within the connectionist model on the social media platform, the culture, the leader, and the follower all act as contextual constraints as schema are developed and employed in interpreting behavioral inputs and processes. In the process of relational interactions, the self-concept (e.g., identity) of the individual is, in part, separable from the group, and in other part inseparable from the group. The liminal space is on and off on the social media platform. And, the information process, which is on and off on the social media platform, is also liminal. On the social media platform, the self enters a community, and it engages in social cognition. The on and off in the social media platform behavior results in the self-concept as the product.

3.1.3.1.3. Information Processing as Followership

Here, followers form schemas and cognitive networks. Using the social media platform for processing, followers make judgments about the leaders. The leaders processing the information do the same. To analyze social perceptions, the five information processing steps become aspects to consider. These steps include selective attention/comprehension, encoding, storage and retention, information retrieval, and judgment (Lord and Brown, 2001). Followers and leaders engage in information

processing and go through these steps in their use of the social media platforms. Information processing enables the followership process to instantiate on a social media platform like Twitter.

3.2. Formal Followership Theory

Leader-centric, follower-centric, and relational approaches can be applied to followers and followership. For followership research as defined by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), in the formal followership theory, there are two lenses, constructionist and role-based lenses, encapsulating both the complete follower-centric lens as well as the relational lens with the followers in focus. In agreement with Uhl-Bien et al., the approaches in present research are aligned with the formal followership theory which maintains, "[f]rom a followership lens, we could even argue that it is in following that leadership is created" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 90).

3.2.1. Theorizing Twitter Followership

Viewing from the constructionist lens, followership is "co-constructed in social and relational interactions between people" (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89). Viewing from the role-based lens, followers are causal agents, and these causal agents use behaviors to enact their follower roles (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This research deems both lenses appropriate, and therefore by extension to Twitter, followers on Twitter are assumed to be both co-creators and role players with causal agency. Below the constructionist and

role-based lenses are detailed and their underlying assumptions for the social media platform--Twitter--are discussed.

Using the constructionist lens and drawing from the social identity theory of leadership, the construction of followership is explored, and the outcomes of the followership process are examined. Using the role-based lens, leaders are considered as recipients of follower behaviors and support (or lack of support), and follower characteristics and follower behaviors are examined.

3.2.2. Constructionist Lens

The constructionist lens identifies followership/leadership as a co-created social and relational process that happens between people (Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien, 2012). Leadership involves influencing followers, and followership involves deference to leaders (Uhl-Bien and Pillai, 2007). With followership, there is leadership. That is, without followers and following behaviors, there is no leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Viewed through the constructionist lens (Figure 9), the leading and following behaviors shape followership/leadership. In turn, followership/leadership, the social and relational process, produces followership/leadership outcomes. In Phase I of this research, the followership/leadership process is examined with the constructionist lens. In Phase II, the outcomes of the followership/leadership process are also examined with the constructionist lens (See Figure 9).

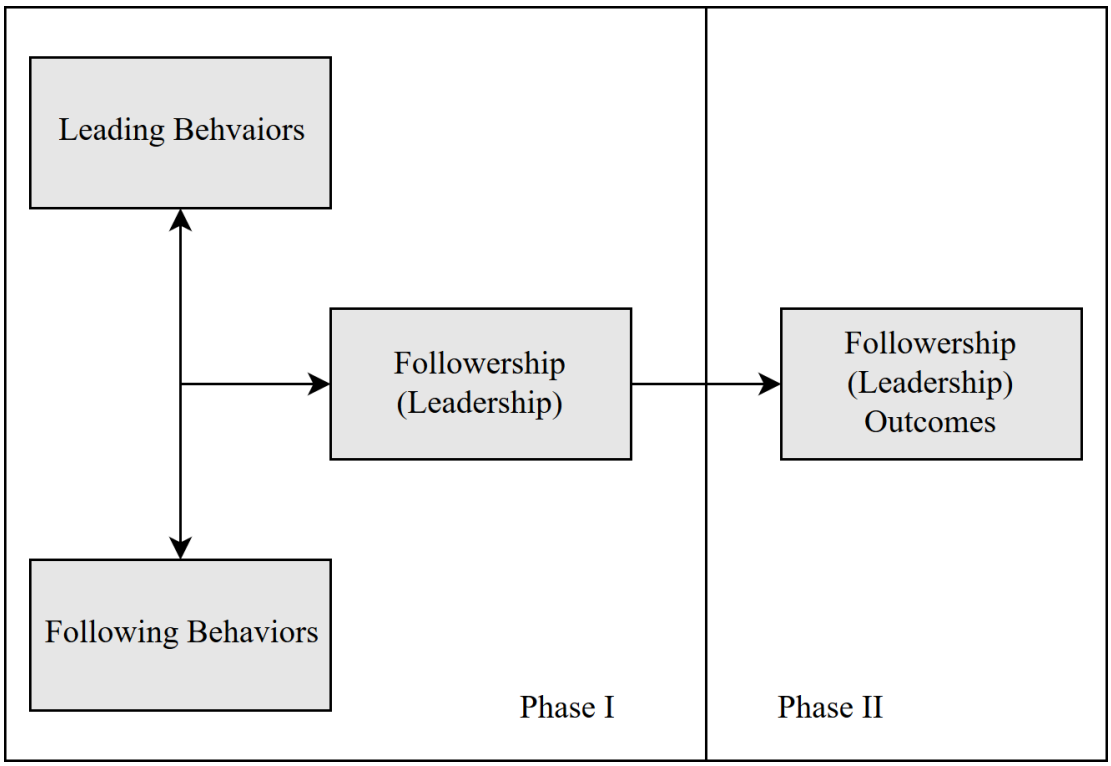

Figure 9. Constructionist Lens

Reprinted from The Leadership Quarterly, Vol. 25, Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B., & Carsten, M. K., Followership theory: A review and research agenda, Pages No. 83-104, Copyright (2013), with permission from Elsevier.

3.2.3. Role-based Lens

The role-based lens identifies followership as a rank or position (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Viewed through the role-based lens, followership is a role played by the followers. The role-based lens is also called “revising the lens” (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). The role-

based research approaches consider how followers influence leader attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This lens lends itself to investigating ways that followers construe and enact their follower role along with the outcomes associated with follower role behavior (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Followers' characteristics shape follower behaviors. In the followership/leadership process, followership (and followers') characteristics and behaviors result in followership outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). And, depending on the leader, the followership behaviors will result in varied outcomes (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Hence, in Phase III, the followers' characteristics and behaviors are examined with the role-based lens (See Figure 10).

To note, the followership and leadership outcomes can be considered from multiple levels of analysis such as individual (e.g., leader motivation or follower effectiveness), relationship (e.g., Leader-Member Exchange) and work unit (e.g., goal accomplishment). Possibly, there are other units of analysis appropriate in the social media and information technology platform contexts. In this research, the inquiries are undertaken and situated at only the individual level.

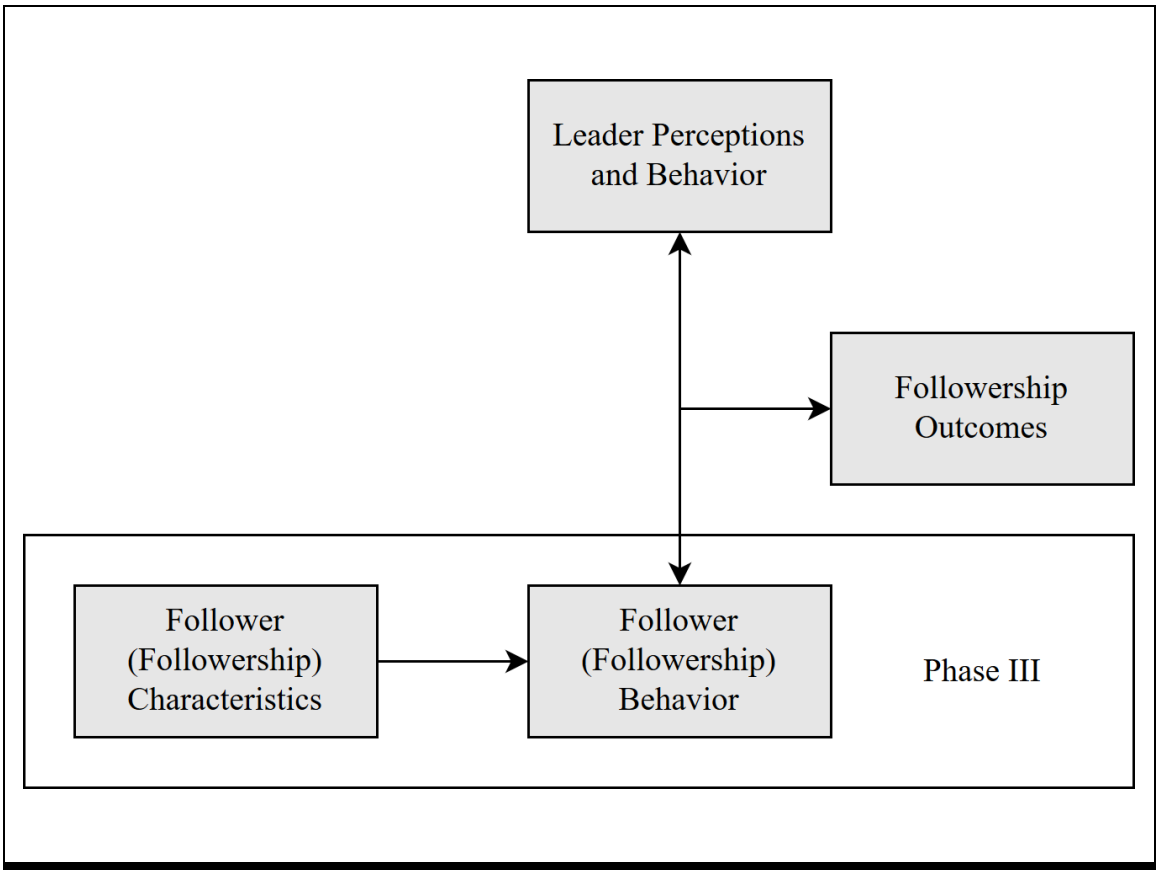

Figure 10. Role-based Lens

Reprinted from The Leadership Quarterly, Vol. 25, Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B., & Carsten, M. K., Followership theory: A review and research agenda, Pages No. 83-104, Copyright (2013), with permission from Elsevier.

3.2.4. Assumptions about Twitter Followership

In the introduction and the literature review, rational justification is provided for the appropriateness of the use of followership lenses in the context of social media platforms such as Twitter. In Phase I of this research, basic assumptions are evaluated, and the rational justification is empirically verified to strengthen the arguments for

followership research as an avenue for understanding social media platforms such as Twitter.

Assumption #1: The process of followership/leadership is present on Twitter.

Platforms such as Twitter are fundamentally built on the concept of followership. Without followership, this social media platform would cease to exist in its current form. Therefore, followership is essential and present in social media platforms such as Twitter.

Assumption #2: Leader-follower interaction is ongoing on social media platforms.

It is easy to observe people interact with each other on Twitter. If assumption #1 is true and if followership/leadership exist on Twitter, these people who engage with each other have ongoing interaction as evidenced by their usage of Twitter. And, many follow other people who do not follow them. This supports a one directional (e.g., followership) relationship on social media platforms such as Twitter.

Assumption #3: Followers have power and influence.

Followers' power and influence justify followership research on social media platforms. Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) suggested that followers are not simply one-dimensional recipients and moderators of the leader's influence. Accordingly, in this research, followers are assumed to have power and influence. That is, they are both co-

creators and role-players in the followership/leadership process on social media platforms such as Twitter.

Assumption #4: Twitter followers are co-creators in the followership process.

The use of the constructionist lens relies on followers as co-creators in the construction of followership/leadership on social media platforms such as Twitter. Followers construct the reality on social media platforms such as Twitter; hence, the constructionist lens allows the examination of the followership phenomenon on social media platforms such as Twitter.

Assumption #5: Twitter followers are role players in the followership process.

The use of the role-based lens relies on followers playing a role with causal agency in the followership/leadership process on social media platforms such as Twitter. Followers are role players on social media platforms; hence, the role-based lens allows the examination of the roles played in the followership phenomenon on social media platforms such as Twitter.

3.3. Twitter Followership

With a multitude of people to follow, followers choose the people they wish to follow; that is, followers elect to follow some and not others. Through this election, people engage in leader-follower interaction. By way of this interaction on Twitter, the behaviors of followers and leaders construct followership/leadership. In Phase I of this

research, I explore the first research question, "*What is Twitter followership?*" To accomplish this objective, a qualitative inquiry is undertaken to study the construction of followership/leadership in relation to Twitter identities.

3.3.1. Twitter Identities

The conceptualization of identity seeks the answer to the question "Who am I?" in relation to some social category (or object) (Carter and Grover, 2015). At the individual level, there are several structural, symbolic, and interactionist identity theories, for example, identity theory, role-identity theory, and identity control theory (Carter and Grover, 2015). Identity theories distinguish between ideas of the self-concept and identity. The self-concept contains the totality of meanings that individuals hold about themselves. Identity is how people observe and categorize themselves relative to others.

> What you share on Twitter may be viewed all around the world instantly. You are what you Tweet! – Twitter (2016)

Twitter identity is symbolic by way of words that people use to self-represent on Twitter. This self-representation refers to "a conscious belief or potential conscious expression about 'me' that may be symbolized in words, images, or bodily tensions such as posture, gait, muscle tensions, and gesture" (Horowitz, 2012, p. 2). Identity has many dimensions based on the multiple identity theories mentioned above. Identity can be an individual's personality, needs, and values because these are different dimensions of how people are observed and categorized relative to others. For example, if Katy Perry--the

most followed person on Twitter--is looked at, her personality, values, and needs can be perceived through the words she associates herself with and uses to represent herself on Twitter. Then, people can observe her personality, needs, and values and categorize her relative to others. This idea can be extended to all other people on Twitter.

3.3.2. Social Identities

In Phase II of this research, the phenomenon of ITE followership is considered from the perspective of social identity theory. This research investigates the second research question: "*What are the outcomes associated with Twitter followership?*" As my focus is on Twitter identities as the outcome of the followership/leadership process, more specifically, this research examines the Twitter identities as the outcomes of Twitter followership. In refining my second research question to specifically study the Twitter identities, this research focuses on "*How are the collective Twitter identities (personalities, needs, and values) of followers and the individual Twitter identities (personalities, needs, and values) of leaders related to each other?*"

Social identity theory views followership/leadership as a group process generated by social categorization and prototype-based depersonalization processes associated with social identity (Hogg, 2001). At the collective level, social identity theory explains how identity arises from membership in social groups or categories (Carter and Grover, 2015). In a process called depersonalization, individuals' categorization of themselves as group members motivates them to become like others in some in-group (as opposed to members

of some out-group). When people follow other people and when people gain followers--thus expanding group membership on social media--depersonalization occurs.

In Phase II, an exploration is made to understand social identity on social media platforms such as Twitter. Drawing from the social identity theory, this research attempts to discover and describe the Twitter identities shedding light on the social categorization and the depersonalization process on social media platforms such as Twitter. This will allow for a better understanding of the relationship between the leader's personality, needs, and values, and the followers' personality, needs, and values (Figure 11).

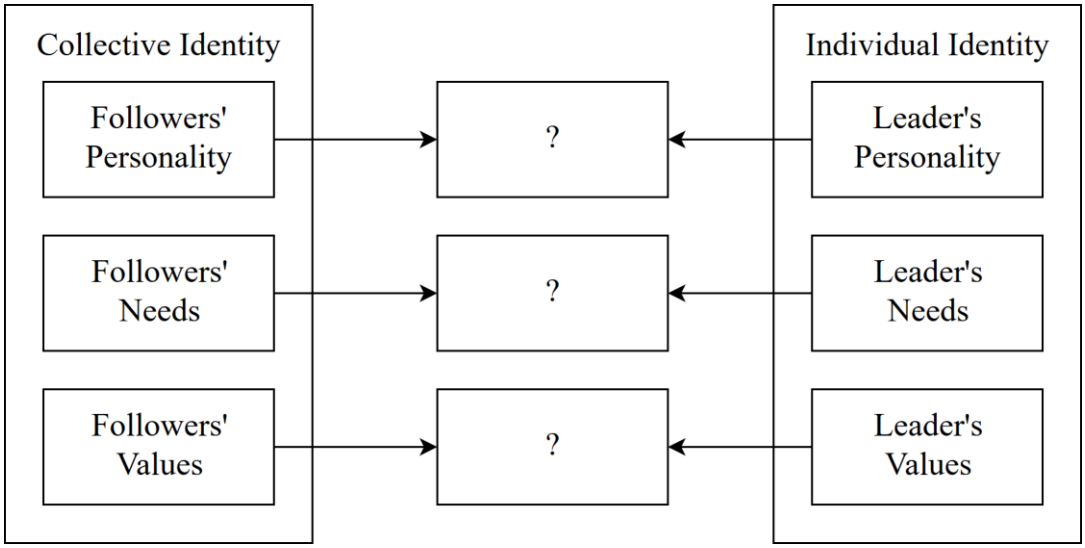

Figure 11. Phase II - Conceptual Model

3.3.2.1. Big Five Personality

Personality is a facet of identity. The Big Five personality model allows the investigation of personality (Barrick and Mount, 1991)**.** The Big Five personality model represents the widely used characteristics in describing how a person engages with the world. The model includes five primary dimensions: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness. These five major personality characteristics are defined in Table 1.

Table 1. Big Five Personality

Source: IBM. (2018, October 17). Personality insights. *IBM Cloud Docs*. Retrieved from https://console.bluemix.net/docs/services/personality-insight

Characteristics	**Definitions**
Agreeableness	A person's tendency to be compassionate and cooperative toward others.
Conscientiousness	A person's tendency to act in an organized or thoughtful way.
Extraversion	A person's tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others.
Neuroticism	The extent to which a person's emotions are sensitive to the person's environment.
Openness	The extent to which a person is open to experiencing a variety of activities.
Note: Reprint Courtesy of International Business Machines Corporation, © (2018) International Business Machines Corporation.	

3.3.2.2. Needs

Needs are a facet of identity. “Needs represent aspects of a product resonating with a person” (IBM, 2018). It is “an immediate outcome of internal and external occurrences” (Murray, 1953, p. 60). Murray (1953) described needs as forces that move people in a certain direction to gratify those needs. Similarly, Chen (2011) explained how needs motivate people to move from disequilibrium toward equilibrium. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) and Ford (2005) found twelve categories of needs: excitement, harmony, curiosity, ideal, closeness, self-expression, liberty, love, practicality, stability, challenge, and structure. These twelve needs are defined in Table 2.

Table 2. Needs

Source: IBM. (2018, October 17). Personality insights. *IBM Cloud Docs*. Retrieved from https://console.bluemix.net/docs/services/personality-insight

Need	**Individuals who score high...**
Excitement	Want to get out there and live life, have upbeat emotions, and want to have fun.
Harmony	Appreciate other people, their viewpoints, and their feelings.
Curiosity	Have a desire to discover, find out, and grow.
Ideal	Desire perfection and a sense of community.

Table 2. Needs (Continued)

Source: IBM. (2018, October 17). Personality insights. *IBM Cloud Docs*. Retrieved from https://console.bluemix.net/docs/services/personality-insight

Need	**Individuals who score high...**
Closeness	Relish being connected to family and setting up a home.
Self-expression	Enjoy discovering and asserting their own identities.
Liberty	Have a desire for fashion and new things, as well as the need for escape.
Love	Enjoy social contact, whether one-to-one or one-to-many. Any brand that is involved in bringing people together taps this need.
Practicality	Have a desire to get the job done, a desire for skill and efficiency, which can include physical expression and experience.
Stability	Seek equivalence in the physical world. They favor the sensible, the tried and tested.
Challenge	Have an urge to achieve, to succeed, and to take on challenges.
Structure	Exhibit groundedness and a desire to hold things together. They need things to be well organized and under control.

3.3.2.3. Values

Values are a facet of identity. Values represent the motivating factors of an individual influencing their decision making (Schwartz, 2012). Schwartz (2012) identified five dimensions of values: self-transcendence, conservation, hedonism, self-enhancement, and open to change. These five dimensions of values are defined in Table 3.

Table 3. Values

Source: IBM. (2018, October 17). Personality insights. *IBM Cloud Docs*. Retrieved from https://console.bluemix.net/docs/services/personality-insight

Value	**Individuals who score high...**
Self-transcendence	Show concern for the welfare and interests of others.
Conservation	Emphasize self-restriction, order, and resistance to change.
Hedonism	Seek pleasure and sensuous gratification for themselves.
Self-enhancement	Seek personal success for themselves.
Open to change	Emphasize independent action, thought, and feeling, as well as a readiness for new experiences.

3.4. Twitter Follower's Role

In Phase III of this research, Twitter's ITE followership is studied by applying the role-based lens. Therefore, in Phase III, the focus is only on the follower's role (Figure 10). In Phase III, the following research question is investigated: "*What is the role of the followers in Twitter followership?*" Here, the research scopes the follower's role to include only the follower characteristics and the follower behaviors (Figure 12). Understanding the follower's role-based characteristics and their influence on their role-based behaviors gives a follower-centric view of the leader-follower interaction.

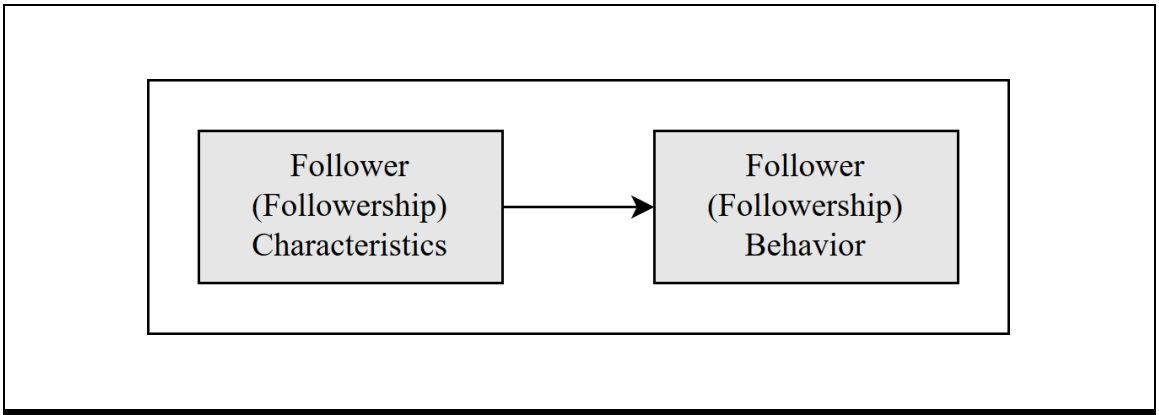

Figure 12. Phase III - Conceptual Model

On Twitter, followers enact their role in a process of leader-follower interaction. The role shapes the interaction. In the scope of this interaction, in this research, an inquiry is made into Twitter followers' characteristics and Twitter followers' behaviors. By refining the third question, the following question is proposed and explored: "How do Twitter followers' characteristics influence Twitter followers' behaviors?"

In Phase I, upon analyzing the focus group discussion transcripts that were collected, key constructs associated with the followers' roles were identified. The role-based constructs identified fall into two categories: followers' characteristics and followers' behaviors. Followers' characteristics identified include personal sense of power, electronic courage (eCourage), social capital, intensity of twitter usage, and perceived anonymity. Here, in this research, two types of followers' behaviors were identified: promotive and engaging. Followers played a role by enacting promotive behaviors such as having a voice and helping. Followers also played a role by enacting engagement behaviors such as empowerment and disempowerment behaviors. In Phase III, these constructs that were identified in Phase I were used to study the Twitter followers' roles.

3.4.1. Follower Characteristics

Followers are not amorphous. Individuals are varied, and they possess innate and acquired characteristics (Griffiths, 2017). Their characteristics shape who they are and what they do (Griffiths, 2017). A follower's characteristics stem from traits, motivations, perceptions and constructions of the follower (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten, 2014). Follower characteristics such as sense of power, electronic courage (eCourage), and social capital were identified in the focus group discussions in Phase I. Intensity of twitter usage and perceived anonymity were noted in Phase I and controlled for in the empirical study in Phase III. Below, each of the follower characteristics (sense of power,

electronic courage (eCourage), and social capital) along with intensity of twitter usage, and perceived anonymity are discussed in greater detail.

Sense of power refers to the self-held belief about one's own ability to control resources and influence the behaviors and outcomes of others on a social media platform. This definition is adapted upon minor modification from Anderson, John, and Keltner (2012) for the Twitter context. Here, power is a perception of the capacity of a person to influence other people (Anderson et al., 2012).

Electronic courage (eCourage) refers to the willingness to act in the face of fear on a social media platform. Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, and Sternberg (2007) provided a list of definitions for courage. I draw from Norton and Weiss (2009) and Woodard's (2004) idea of courage as an individual's willingness to act in spite of fear. Woodard and Pury (2007) typified courage into four categories: (1) work/employment courage, (2) patriotic, religion, or belief-based physical courage, (3) social–moral courage, and (4) independent courage/family-based courage. In the present research, the focus is on social-moral courage on Twitter.

Social capital refers to the extent to which resources are accumulated through the relationships among people (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe, 2007). Social capital takes on a network perspective and from the network perspective, there are three types of network social capital: bridging, bonding, and maintaining (Ellison et al., 2007). Here, social capital is not considered as multidimensional, so social capital is not differentiated

by the type of network social capital. Such differentiation is appropriate for network analysis studies.

Intensity of Twitter usage refers to the extent to which an individual uses the social media platform in their day-to-day lives. This definition is adapted from Ellison et al. (2007). Intensity of Twitter usage is assumed to account for the variation across the different constructs at the different levels of usage. Here, intensity of Twitter usage is considered for its moderation effect between follower characteristics and behaviors.

Anonymity is the extent of liberation from social evaluation (Pinsonneault and Heppel, 1998). In application, it is the degree to which an individual perceives that their use of Twitter is not identifiable (Ayyagari, Grover, and Purvis, 2011). Anonymity is used to account for the variation across the different constructs at the different levels of perceived anonymity. Anonymity is considered for its moderation effect between follower characteristics and behaviors.

3.4.2. Follower/Followership Behaviors

Follower behaviors are the enactment of their follower roles. Twitter users as followers enact their role on the social media platform. In the literature, many behaviors are worthy of exploration such as their proactivity, initiative communication, obedience, resistance, upward influence, voice, decent, feedback setting, and advising (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Again, follower behaviors were identified in the focus group discussions in Phase I. Below, each of the identified follower behaviors--voice, helping, empowering,

and disempowering–which are relevant to follower behaviors on Twitter are discussed in more detail.

3.4.2.1. Promotive Behaviors

Van Dyne and LePine (1998) investigated extra-role behaviors from the context of self, peers, and supervisor. There are behaviors that are in-role, and there are extra-role behaviors that are not required and expected. An extra-role behavior is positive and discretionary unlike the in-role behaviors, the absence of which can lead to reprimands and negative financial consequence in a work environment (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). Van Dyne and LePine (1998) identified having a voice and helping as two distinct extra-role behaviors. *Voice* is a challenging promotive behavior in relation to leaders. With Twitter voice behaviors, Twitter users take actions such as developing and making recommendations concerning issues and speaking up and encouraging others to get involved in an issue affecting people. *Helping* is an affiliative promotive behavior in relation to the followers. With Twitter helping behaviors, Twitter users take actions such as getting involved to benefit others and helping others learn about new things.

3.4.2.2. Engagement Behaviors

Empowerment behavior is an engagement behavior in which individuals engage in the process of followership. Empowerment involves increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power of the leaders (Gutierrez, 1990). Spear and Peterson (2000) differentiate the psychometric properties of empowerment along cognitive, emotional, and behavioral

dimensions. Behavioral dimensions are the focus in the present research. Here, behavioral empowerment involves skills and activities undertaken by the individual. Empowerment behavior is Twitter users taking actions such as tweeting to influence an issue or engage in a conversation about an issue that empowers.

Disempowerment behavior is a disengagement behavior in which individuals disengage from the process of followership. Disempowerment involves decreasing personal, interpersonal, or political power of the leaders by avoiding, ignoring, and dismissing the leaders. Disempowerment behaviors are behaviors alternate to the empowerment behaviors. Here, drawing from Faulkner (2001), disempowerment is defined in the scope of social media platforms such as Twitter. Twitter users take actions such as ignoring a tweet or refusing to share or like a tweet.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This research examines Twitter followership. Twitter was selected for its singular focus on followership. Facebook, the largest social media platform, supports ITE followership, too. However, Facebook emphasizes bidirectional relationships (i.e., friendship). Therefore, here, Twitter is more appropriate as the ideal platform for research inquiries into ITE followership.

This research involves a multimethod analysis of Twitter. Three data collection methods and four analyses were used to address the three research questions. In Phase I, "*What is Twitter followership?*" were investigated with the focus group method for data collection, and the focus group discussion transcripts were analyzed using the narrative method. Note that in Phase I, the focus group discussion transcripts were also analyzed using the framework method, and the analysis yielded key constructs associated with Twitter followership which were used later in Phase III. In Phase II, "*How are the collective Twitter identities (personalities, needs, and values) of followers and the individual Twitter identities (personalities, needs, and values) of leaders related to each other?*" was investigated by collecting and processing Twitter data and comparing the output of the followers and the leaders (social media influencers). In Phase III, "*How do Twitter followers' characteristics influence Twitter followers' behaviors?*" was

investigated by examining followers' characteristics and behaviors identified in the analysis of focus group discussion transcripts in Phase I using the framework method, designing a survey instrument to measure the constructs, surveying with the designed instrument, and then analyzing the survey data with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). See Table 4 for an outline of the empirical studies.

Table 4. Outline of the Empirical Studies

Phase	Research Question	Data Collection	Data Analysis
I	What is Twitter followership? Note: Twitter followers' characteristics and behaviors constructs identified with the framework method were later used in Phase III.	Focus Group Method Focus group discussions were held and recorded with Twitter users (n=19) from the general population.	Narrative Method Framework Method
II	What are the outcomes associated with Twitter followership? Specific: How are the collective Twitter identities (personalities, needs, and values) of followers and the individual Twitter identities (personalities, needs, and values) of leaders related to each other?	Twitter Data Extraction Method with Python Personality Insights data was created using the IBM Watson Personality Insights service (with the extracted Twitter data).	Comparison Personality Insights Data of followers is compared with their followed leader.

Table 4. Outline of the Empirical Studies (Continued)			
III	What is the role of the followers in Twitter followership? Specific: How do Twitter followers' characteristics influence Twitter followers' behaviors?	Survey Method Twitter users (n=303) were surveyed using Mechanical Turk.	PLS-SEM Method

4.1. Phase I: A Preliminary Conceptualization of Twitter Followership

An exploratory inquiry is undertaken to investigate the concept of ITE followership on Twitter and to understand the phenomenon of Twitter followership. Focus groups were employed. With the focus group method, the objective was to collect data for conceptualizing Twitter followership by discovering core narratives, and additionally, verifying the assumptions about the ITE followership phenomenon. In the process of conceptualizing Twitter followership, the objective was also to identify key role-based constructs associated with followers.

Twitter users were selected as the target population for this inquiry. As Twitter users directly interact with Twitter, they are expected to be knowledgeable about the platform. Twitter users are information rich as they use the platform. Focus groups are suitable to use with participants who are knowledgeable about a phenomenon (Carey and Absuby, 2012). From the general population, Twitter users were invited to participate in the focus group discussions.

Focus group discussions were organized and held at the researcher's institution. Discussions revolved around Twitter usage, followership (the social and relational process), and Twitter users characteristics and behaviors. Below, see section 4.1.4. for details on the focus group discussion proceedings and questions. Discussions were recorded, and audio files were transcribed. Data was analyzed for an initial conceptualization of Twitter's ITE followership as well as for support for the foundational assumptions using the narrative method. Also, using the framework method, data was analyzed for key role-based constructs associated with followers.

4.1.1. Focus Group Method

As a method, focus groups concentrate on the topic rather than on the group process of group interaction (Carey and Absuby, 2012). Focus groups are best for evaluating new concepts and ideas (Edmunds, 2000). As the objective here is to conceptualize Twitter followership, this method is deemed appropriate as this research is an exploration of new concepts and ideas.

Focus groups can be used to collect rich, detailed data (Carey and Absuby, 2012). Participants tend to give candid responses (Krueger and Casey, 2009). The data from the focus groups offer insights into attitudes and beliefs for the underlying behavior by providing context and perspective (Carey and Absuby, 2012). Focus groups enable a group process that can help participants to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less likely to be attained in a one-to-one interview (Krueger and Casey, 2009).

4.1.1.1. Recruitment for the Focus Groups

Upon receiving IRB approval, recruitment commenced. Recruitment was conducted using Craigslist and Facebook for ads, posting fliers on public community boards, emails to students in undergraduate and master's/gradaute courses, and soliciting in personal networks (e.g., Twitter and referral requests). Recruitment efforts were time consuming and required a tremendous amount of effort and effective management of limited resources. The recruitment efforts approximately cost $400 in direct expenses. The indirect expenses (e.g., gasoline for travel) were not recorded. The $400 expenditure does not include the token gifts given to the participants which is explained below.

During the recruitment, prospective participants (who responded to the recruitment calls) were sent an invitation letter, and they were asked to fill out a screening questionnaire. Prospective participants were screened to ensure that they were active users willing to attend on a given date and time. If the prospective participants passed the screening, using Evite, an invitation was sent to those interested in and qualified to participate in the focus group, and these individuals were confirmed for attendance on a given date and a time.

A total of three focus groups were successfully organized. Initially, more than 8 to 10 people agreed to participate in each of the three focus groups. Before the focus group meeting, an Evite reminder was sent to ensure participation from those who agreed to attend in response to the first Evite. On the days of the focus group meetings, not all of the people who confirmed actually attended. The first two focus group meetings had 7

and 6 participants, respectively. For the third focus group, 4 people attended to participate. Hence, the third focus group was disbanded. Recruitment efforts were engaged for a second time to recruit for the third focus group. Once again, approximately 10 people agreed to attend the third focus group discussion. However, due to lower attendance, and the third focus group discussion was undertaken with 6 participants. A summary of the number of participants and the focus group demographics can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Focus Group Demographics

Focus Group	N	Gender	Age	Employment	Marital Status	Recruitment
#1	7	Female: 6 Male: 1	18-24: 3 25-34: 1 34-44: 3	Full-time: 3 Self-employed: 2 Student: 2	Divorced: 1 Single: 5 Married: 1	Craigslist: 1 Facebook: 4 Flyer: 1 Referral: 1
#2	6	Female: 4 Male: 2	18-24: 3 34-44: 1 55-64: 2	Full-time: 1 Part-time: 1 Student: 2 Unemployed: 2	Divorced: 1 Single: 4 Married: 1	Craigslist: 2 Facebook: 3 Twitter: 1
#3	6	Female: 4 Male: 2	18-24: 3 25-34: 3	Full-time: 2 Part-time: 2 Student: 1 Unemployed: 1	Single: 5 Married: 1	Craigslist: 3 Facebook: 2 Flyer: 1

Table 5. Focus Group Demographics (Continued)						
Total	19	Female: 14 Male: 5	18-24: 9 25-34: 4 34-44: 4 45-54: 0 55-64: 2 65+: 0	Full-time: 6 Part-time: 3 Self-employed: 2 Student: 5 Unemployed: 3	Divorced: 2 Single: 14 Married: 3	Craigslist: 6 Facebook: 9 Twitter: 1 Flyer: 2 Referral: 1

4.1.1.2. Demographics of the Focus Groups

The focus groups had more female participants than male. In the first focus group, 1 participant was male and 6 were female. In the second focus group, there were 2 male and 4 female participants, And, in the third focus group, there were 2 male and 4 female participants. As the purpose of the research is not to generalize, the gender of participants in the focus groups was deemed adequate to analyze the qualitative data from the focus group.

The focus groups consisted of people from almost all of the age categories. There were 9 participants who were 18-24 years of age, 4 participants who were 25-34 years of age, 4 participants who were 35-44 years of age, and 2 participants who were 55-64 years of age. No focus group participants who were 45-54 or 65 and above. The focus groups had more younger participants than older participants which is to be expected.

The focus groups consisted of people with varied employment. There were 6 participants who were employed full-time, 3 participants who were employed part-time, 2 participants who were self-employed, 5 participants who were students, and 3

participants who were unemployed. Even though there was no conscious effort made to recruit students, 5 students participated in the focus groups. Also, note that none of these students were recruited with emails to students in undergraduate and master's courses. The 5 students were recruited using Craigslist (*n*=1), Facebook (*n*=1), Twitter (*n*=1), fliers (*n*=1), and referral (*n*=1).

The focus groups consisted of participants with differing marital status. There were 2 participants who were divorced, 14 participants who were single, and 3 participants who were married. As such, most of the participants were single.

The largest number (9) of focus group participants were recruited from Facebook. The second largest number (6) of focus group participants were recruited from Craigslist. Only 1-2 participants were recruited using Twitter, fliers, and referrals. As such, Facebook and Craigslist were the most successful avenues for recruiting the majority of participants.

4.1.1.3. Focus Group Discussions

A total of three focus groups were employed. The focus group's discussions were conducted with 6-7 people in each group. The focus groups are of common size. A focus group size of 5-8 people is typical (Krueger and Casey, 2009). All focus group discussions were held at the Bryan School of Business and Economics at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in a conference room. Field notes were kept, and discussions were audio recorded.

Three doctoral students were involved in conducting the focus group discussions. There was one moderator for the focus group discussions. Two doctoral students volunteered as the facilitators. They managed the operations and the technical aspects associated with the focus groups' organization and discussions. Upon arrival at the Bryan School of Business and Economics, the participants were guided to the conference room by the facilitator(s). Participants checked in upon arrival. During the check in, the purpose of the study was explained, the protocols for the focus group discussion were discussed, active Twitter usage was verified, consent forms were read and signed, and donuts and coffee were served to all of the participants.

During the focus group discussions, multiple audio recorders were used to capture the conversations. Use of multiple audio recorders ensures quality recordings. All individuals were notified about the recordings, and all participants gave their consent for the recordings and the use of the recordings for research purposes. Notes were taken to guide the discussions, to organize the voices on the recordings and to jot down immediate thoughts.

An interview prompt was used to guide the focus group discussions. Questions asked by the moderator covered Twitter usage, Twitter's social and relational dynamics (leader-follower interaction in the followership process), and personal characteristics and behaviors. The questions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Focus Group Discussion Questions
Introduction
• *Please introduce yourself.* • *What drove you to using Twitter? How and when do you use Twitter?*
Twitters' Social and Relational Dynamics

• *How do you decide on who to follow and who not to follow?*
  • *What sorts of people do you follow on Twitter?*
  • *What makes you want to follow them?*
• *Do you get influenced by the people you follow and how?*
• *How did you get your followers?*

Users' Characteristics and Behaviors
• *Tell me about how you decide on what to tweet and reply to on Twitter.*   • *Have your beliefs or feelings impacted your use of Twitter and if so, how?* • *Do you think your tweets and replies are responsible for followers acting in a certain way?* • *Do you find your social skills playing a role in the usage of Twitter and if so, how?* • *How open are you about sharing your thoughts on Twitter?*

Each discussion lasted about 90 minutes. At the end, participants signed out (wrote their names to record their participation), and they received a token gift ($15 Amazon gift card and $10 in cash) for their participation. In the case of the canceled focus group, the four participants who attended to participate also received the token gift. The token gift for all the focus group participants totaled $575. The 19 focus group participants were given 23 gift tokens with 4 participants receiving the gift token twice for attending again after the cancellation of the first focus group session.

4.1.2. Narrative Method

For analyzing focus group discussion transcripts, there are multiple approaches (Rabiee, 2004). There is no agreement on a common general approach (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran, 2009). The approach for the analysis is guided by the problem and the purpose of the analysis (Kruger, 2009). Here, the problem involves understanding the construction of Twitter followership and verifying the assumptions. The purpose here is to analyze and to conceptualize the social construction of Twitter followership and to assess the validity of the assumptions. Narrative analysis was employed to achieve these objectives.

Narrative analysis is suitable for studies on social movements, political change, and macro-level phenomena (Riessman, 2002). Here, the research examines Twitter followership at a macro-level. Therefore, by extension, narrative analysis is deemed suitable. With narrative analysis, the object of the investigation is the story itself (Reissman, 2000). In narrative analysis, “groups of people engage in ‘story telling’ and in

doing so produce narratives of their lives" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 423). Narrative analysis "is concerned with understanding how and why people talk about their lives as a story or a series of stories" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 423). The stories are "the description of an event or series of events in a manner that conveys meaning as well as factual information" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 424). Stories serve a purpose. They can entertain, instruct and form a collective worldview (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). Here, the research is concerned with how and why people construct their Twitter followership. Thereby, the purpose of the research is to conceptualize Twitter followership; and by reviewing the narratives, Twitter followership is conceptualized, and the assumptions are supported or rejected.

Narrative analysis is used to understand the social construction of Twitter followership. The narrative concerns itself with issues of identity (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). A narrative provides social construction of identity (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). "Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned" (Rosenweld and Ochburg, 1992, p. 1). Here, the Twitter users' stories are the means by which their identities on the Twitter platform are constructed.

In Phase I, this research focuses on the narrative (story) rather than the accounts of the Twitter users. The accounts of people's lives are their lived experiences which are thought to be captured by the data, and these accounts serve as a representation of a real life (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). "To adopt a narrative approach is to choose to understand

and analyze interview or other data from that perspective rather than, for example, focusing solely on the content of what interviewees are saying or the conversational forms and rules that underlie the interaction" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 428). Instead of looking at the accounts, narrative analysis underscores the "socially constructed nature of the research process and the role 'stories' play in the construction of identity" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 421). "The use of a narrative analysis approach with its focus on the social construction of the story, means that uncovering the 'truth' no longer becomes the object of analysis; there has been a move away from the 'what' to the 'how'" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 423). Here, by understanding how Twitter users construct their Twitter followership, this research describes what followers are doing in those stories and thereby, this research addresses the following question, "What is Twitter followership?" In essence, Twitter followership is the narrative constructed by the Twitter users. Through analysis, this research finds what Twitter followership is for the Twitter users.

4.1.2.1. Narrative Analysis

In the narrative analysis, the following is considered: 1) unit of analysis and the 2) focus of the analysis (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). As for the unit of analysis, there are categorical approaches, and there are holistic approaches. With categorical approaches, the narrative analysis "compares all references to the selected phenomenon within one interview or across several interviews", and with holistic approaches, the narrative analysis seeks to "understand how a particular section of text is part of a life story narrated during the course of a single interview or several interviews with the same

individual" (Earthy & Cronin, 2008, p. 433). The focus of the analysis is on the content of the narrative (story) and on the form (structure) of the narrative (story) (Earthy and Cronin, 2008). "The content of the narrative may include the surface content (what happened?, who was present?, how did different parties react?) and the underlying or latent content (what were the motives or intentions of participants?, what might particular items symbolize for the narrator or others?, what is the meaning and importance of this story for the narrator?)" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 433). As for the form of the narrative, it is concerned with "aspects such as how the plot is structured, the sequence of events, and the language used" (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 433). The framework for narratives categorizes narrative analysis as categorical-content, categorical-form, holistic-content, and holistic-form (Earthy & Cronin, 2008).

Here, the research takes a categorical-content approach to narrative analysis. By taking a categorical approach, this research compares all references to the selected phenomenon across all of the interviews. Also, by taking a categorical approach, the stories of the Twitter users are compared. By taking a content approach, here, the research focuses on the content of the participants' stories.

All of the recordings from the focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim. The filler words (e.g., um) were removed. The transcripts were read multiple times, and familiarity was gained by reading through the text and listening to the recordings. The transcriptions from the different focus groups were organized by question and by cutting

and pasting the text after each respective question across all of the focus groups. The data was categorially analyzed by reviewing the content.

4.1.3. Framework Method

Focus group discussion transcripts were analyzed with the framework method. Using the framework method, constructs associated with followers' characteristics and behaviors were identified. In the framework method, the procedure for analysis has seven stages (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, and Redwood, 2013):

Stage 1: Transcription

Stage 2: Familiarization with the interview

Stage 3: Coding

Stage 4: Developing a working analytical framework

Stage 5: Applying the analytical framework

Stage 6: Charting data into the framework matrix

Stage 7: Interpreting the data

4.1.3.1. Framework Analysis

In Phase I, as described above, focus group recordings were transcribed verbatim, and were read and listened to for familiarization. The transcripts were read line by line, and were coded. The codes were categorized and charted as follower characteristics and follower behaviors with the role-based lens as the analytical framework. When viewing through the role-based lens, followers play a role. In their role, they have characteristics,

and they exhibit behaviors. The followers' characteristics shape their behaviors (Figure 12). For details on the role-based lens, see Chapter III on theoretical foundations.

Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software, was used in coding and in analyzing the focus group transcripts. The synthesis and categorization of the codes are the basis for the constructs--sense of power, eCourage, social capital, voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors--identified.

To reiterate, using the transcriptions from the focus group discussions, the framework method is applied. And, using the role-based lens as the framework, the constructs were categorized as followers' characteristics or followers' behaviors. A priori, the role is thought to have follower characteristics and behaviors. So, the transcriptions were coded, and these codes were conceptualized as categories of follower characteristics or follower behaviors.

As noted in the causal structure of the role-based lens, the follower characteristics are thought to influence the follower behaviors. Thereby, the framework imposes a causal structure (Figure 12). That is, in the roles played by the followers, their characteristics influence their behaviors. Hence, followers' characteristics--sense of power, eCourage, social capital--were modeled to influence followers' behaviors--voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors. Therefore, a research model (Figure 15) is developed to illustrate the follower characteristics influencing the follower behaviors.

4.2. Phase II: Examination of Social Media Identities of Leaders and Followers

In Phase II, followers' and leaders' identities were examined and described. To examine and describe leaders' Twitter identities (personality, needs, and values), and followers' collective identities (collective personality, needs, and values), Twitter data were collected from the Twitter timelines of two highly followed individuals and their followers. IBM Watson Personality Service was used to infer the Twitter identities of all individuals (followers and leaders) from the Twitter data from each of their Twitter timelines. Using the inferred Twitter identities, the relationship between leaders' Twitter identities and followers' Twitter identities are analyzed and described.

4.2.1. Choosing Leaders and Followers

This inquiry is limited to two leaders and six to seven hundred followers of each due to limited resources. For the leaders, Katy Perry and Bill Gates were chosen. They are from different industries and from different walks of life. They are well-known public figures active on Twitter. Katy Perry is an entertainer in the music industry. On October 15, 2017, Katy Perry was the most followed person on Twitter. Therefore, it seems appropriate to choose her for an inquiry into Twitter followership. Bill Gates is also followed by millions and is renowned in the information technology industry and for his philanthropy. He was chosen for his prominence in the information technology industry which differentiates him from Katy Perry. The Twitter profiles of Katy Perry and Bill Gates are described below in Table 7. As for the followers whose Twitter data was

collected, they were pseudo-randomly sampled (described below) from Katy Perry's and Bill Gates's list of followers on Twitter.

Table 7. Profiles of Katy Perry and Bill Gates					
Name	**Tweets**	**Following**	**Followers**	**Likes**	**Date**
Katy Perry	8708	204	105 Million	5768	10/15/2017
Bill Gates	2494	184	40 Million	25	10/15/2017

4.2.2. Sampling Followers

Twitter Application Programming Interface (API) was used to engage with the Twitter platform to acquire a pseudo-random sample of followers for the two leaders. To the best of my knowledge, there is no method for randomly sampling followers from an entire population of followers using the Twitter API. Using Python scripts with the Twitter API, the problem was overcome. Twitter screennames of active followers were collected daily over a period of one week at random times. Table 8 shows the dates and the random times at which Twitter screennames were collected. The random times were selected using the rand() function in Excel. Then, the 10,000 Twitter handles were collected along with the count of tweets of followers for a total of 140,000 Twitter screennames for both Katy Perry and Bill Gates (70,000 each) over a one-week period (7 days). The random times were selected from 8 AM to 10 PM. The data collection was

limited to 8 AM to 10 PM due to limited resources (e.g., time). It was not possible to collect all of the screen names at one time because Twitter API has rate limits; the GET followers/ids method had a limit of 15 requests per 15 minutes. Note that the times listed in Table 8 are the start times.

Table 8. Date and Random Time for Week 1

Date	Time
Sunday, May 21, 2017	8 PM
Monday, May 22, 2017	4 PM
Tuesday, May 23, 2017	4 PM
Wednesday, May 25, 2017	10 PM
Thursday, May 26, 2017	2 PM
Friday, May 27, 2017	11 AM
Saturday, May 28, 2017	9 AM

The GET followers/ids method extracted the screen names of the followers ordered by the most recently to have engaged following actions. Due to repetitive actions, followers' screen names overlapped, and there were duplicates. In Excel, a pivot table was used to remove the duplicates. Note that, for analysis, the IBM Personality Insights service recommends 1,500 words for stable estimation in inferring identities. Using Excel, screen names were filtered to include only those which had tweets greater than or

equal to 250 in their timelines. Using sample data to determine, 250 was selected as the cutoff. Upon removing the duplicates and filtering the screennames to only those with more than 249 tweets, there were 2,380 unique screennames of followers for Katy Perry and 4,070 unique screennames of followers for Bill Gates. However, all of these screennames could not be used for the purpose of the research here in Phase II.

4.2.3. Data Cleansing

There were issues with the followers' screen names sampled. With the passage of time, some followers unfollowed. Some of the profiles could not be located on Twitter. Some users deleted their accounts. Some users set their timelines to private. Some of the followers had fewer than 250 tweets; that is, possibly, some users deleted some of their tweets. Some users wrote in languages other than English. And, some timelines were for spam and bots.

A target was set initially to collect 1,000 viable screennames for each leader as it is a nice round number. To arrive at 1,000 for each leader and to address the aforementioned issues, I ultimately processed 3,379 screennames for Katy Perry and 2,899 screennames for Bill Gates and dropped the screennames with issues mentioned above. Note that the yield of screennames initially varied between Katy Perry with 2,380 and Bill Gates with 4,070. That is, the yield of follower screennames was not the same. For Katy Perry, there were only 2,380 unique screennames on hand, and to reach 1,000, this was not sufficient. For Katy Perry, to reach 1,000, 3,379 unique screennames were needed. She had more spam and bots following her compared to Bill Gates. Some

profiles did not represent human followers. That is, for example, there were Twitter timelines plastered with Katy Perry (or affiliated celebrities' content). Human followers are not likely to make 10 posts in 10 consecutive seconds mechanistically.

To address the insufficient list of pseudo-random sampled followers for Katy Perry, an additional 70,000 Twitter handles for both Katy Perry and for Bill Gates were collected during a second week of Twitter screennames collection. Once again, the rand() function (in Excel) was used to select the random time between 8 AM to 10 PM. The Twitter screennames were collected at those random times (Table 9). Once again, a pivot table was used to remove the duplicate screennames and those with fewer than 250 tweets. Note that the screennames from this set were used to sample 1,000 viable Katy Perry followers. More issues followed (described below), and this resulted in eliminating more screennames, and in the end, arriving at a sample of 600-700 pseudo-random screennames of Katy Perry and Bill Gates individually.

Table 9. Date and Random Time for Week 2

Date	Time
Saturday, September 9, 2017	5 PM
Sunday, September 10, 2017	9 PM
Monday, September 11, 2017	9 PM
Tuesday, September 12, 2017	8 PM

Table 9. Date and Random Time for Week 2 (Continued)	
Wednesday, September 13, 2017	10 AM
Thursday, September 14, 2017	9 PM
Friday, September 15, 2017	2 PM

The lists of Twitter handles were filtered based on predetermined criteria. The first criterion is that the Twitter handle is associated with a timeline. Some of the Twitter handles did not lead to any timelines. These Twitter handles were dropped. The second criterion is that the Twitter timelines are public. Some Twitter handles lead to profiles stating, "This account's tweets are protected." I wanted to respect users' privacy and did not pry into their private timelines. Protected timelines were dropped. The third criterion is that the timelines have tweets ≥ 250 (cutoff) because the analysis (that is, text analytics via IBM Watson Personality Insights service) required a minimum of 1,500 words for stable estimation of inferences. Timelines with fewer than 250 tweets were dropped. The fourth criterion is that Twitter timelines are in English because this inquiry focuses on English text as the leaders are native English speakers, and English is a part of the social reality of the leaders and followers. Therefore, timelines with foreign text identified by even a single tweet were dropped. The fifth criterion is that Twitter timelines are for individuals, and the timelines of organizations, social movements, products, services, missions, and other entities were dropped. The sixth criterion is that Twitter timelines

were devoid of spam or bots. Twitter timelines identified as spam or as bots were dropped. The seventh criterion is that Twitter handles still had ≥ 250 tweets in their timelines as some time has passed since the collection of the Twitter handles. I checked to verify tweets ≥ 250 at the time of data collection, and a few of the Twitter handles were dropped. The last criterion was that the followers were following the leader at the time of data collection. If followers were not following their respective leader, they were dropped. Note that the criteria above for data cleansing were not implemented sequentially (Table 10).

4.2.4. Tweet Collection

Once the first six filtering criteria were met, I checked to confirm the followers' following of the leaders at the time of data collection. If the follower was confirmed to be following the leader, I collected all of the text from the followers' timelines up to October 15th, 2017 at 11:30 AM. For the leaders and their followers, both their tweets on their timelines and their profile descriptions were programmatically collected. Each of the leaders' and followers' timeline tweets were individually stored in CSV files. At the same time, in a separate CSV file, I programmatically collected profile descriptions available on each of the followers' and leaders' timelines.

As of October 15th, 2017, at 11:30 AM, all of the text from the tweets on the timelines of Katy Perry, Bill Gates, and 600-700 followers of each were collected and stored in individual CSV files for each timeline. It was not possible to collect all of the data required on October 15th, 2017 at 11:30 AM. Data was collected on October 15th,

2017 at 11:30 AM for Katy Perry and Bill Gates. Data for the followers was collected until January 19th, 2018 at 10 PM, and this data had tweets after October 15th, 2017 at 11:30 AM until January 19the, 2018 at 10 PM. While date that were required were retained, tweets dated after October 15th, 2017 at 11:30 AM were removed for the tweet collection.

4.2.5. Summary of Data Collection

The data collection involved choosing leaders, sampling followers, and collecting the Twitter data. These different aspects of the data collection are intertwined. Lists of Twitter followers were collected. The tweets were collected from leaders' and followers' timelines indexed by unique Twitter handles/usernames. The Twitter data collected includes descriptive information on individual timelines, such as the count of tweets, followers, following, and likes along with location, language, username, location, and gender. See Table 10 for a conceptual and a technical description of the data collection process.

Twitter offered a means to programmatically collect data via the Twitter Application Programming Interface (API). That is, the Twitter API allows for programmatic access to read and write Twitter data. To gain access to the Twitter API, authentication credentials were acquired through the Twitter website. Python was chosen to engage the Twitter API as it had been used by other researchers, and they provided guides (Roesslein, 2009). Using Python with the Tweepy library, Twitter API was engaged, and data was extracted and stored in csv files.

Table 10. Summary of the Process for Collecting Twitter Data			
Step	**Conceptual Specification**	**Technical Specification**	**Estimated Time to Complete the Step**
Sampling Followers			
1	Identified and outlined an efficient programmatic approach for collecting Twitter data.	Selected the software (Python), wrote out the approach for data collection, and wrote the Python scripts.	30 Hours
2	Acquired a semi-random sample of followers for Katy Perry and Bill Gates.	Used a Python script to get a random list of followers' Twitter handles for @KatyPerry and @BillGates.	28 Hours
3	Filtered the semi-random sample of followers for Katy Perry and Bill Gates for unique handles and tweets ≥ 250.	Using a pivot table and filter feature in Excel, dropped duplicate Twitter handles and those with <250 tweets.	Negligible
3	Filtered the random list of followers' Twitter handles @KatyPerry and @BillGates based on the following criteria: - Found - Public - Tweets ≥ 250 - English - Individual - Not spam or bot	Manually checked and dropped the Twitter handles that did not meet criteria to create a filtered list of followers for Katy Perry and Bill Gates.	20 Hours

Table 10. Summary of the Process for Collecting Twitter Data (Continued)			
Step	**Conceptual Specification**	**Technical Specification**	**Estimated Time to Complete the Step**
Tweet Collection (Cleansing and Other)			
4	Collected all of the text (tweets) on timelines of Katy Perry and Bill Gates up to October 15th, 2017 at 11:30 AM.	Using a Python script, collected and stored in individual CSV files all the tweets with id created on the timelines of @KatyPerry and @BillGates as of October 15th, 2017, at 11:30 AM.	Negligible
5	Rechecked filtered list of followers' Twitter handles @KatyPerry and @BillGates based on the following criteria at the time of tweet collection: - Found - Public - Tweets ≥ 250 - English - Individual - Not spam or bot	At the time of tweet collection, manually checked and dropped the unqualified Twitter handles.	350 Hours
6	Checked that the followers are following leaders at the time of tweet collection.	At the time of tweet collection, checked each Twitter handle/username for following the leader's Twitter handle/username. Dropped the Twitter handler/username if following was FALSE.	Negligible

Table 10. Summary of the Process for Collecting Twitter Data (Continued)			
Step	**Conceptual Specification**	**Technical Specification**	**Estimated Time to Complete the Step**
7	Collected all of the text available on each timeline up to October 15th, 2017 at 11:30 AM.	Using a Python script, all of the tweets on the timeline, if following is TRUE for a Twitter handle/username, were collected. Tweets for each timeline were individually stored in CSV files and manually labeled.	120 Hours
7	Collected profile descriptions (demographic data).	At the time of tweet collection, using a Python script, collected the count of tweets, followers, following, and likes along with location, language, username, and other information. The data was stored in a general CSV file, and it was manually labeled.	20 Hours

A total of 3,176 tweets from Katy Perry and 1,120,894 tweets from 649 followers were collected. And, a total of 2,504 tweets from Bill Gates and 1,137,615 tweets from 700 followers were collected. Note that there is no way to identify only English twitter accounts. After collecting all the tweets and the profile descriptions (demographics data), a visual check was done for non-English content in the tweets.

4.2.6. Methods and Twitter Data Analysis

After collecting the tweets, the tweets from each individual timeline (for followers and leaders) were processed one at a time utilizing IBM Watson Personality Insight service. IBM Watson Personality Insight service infers individuals' Big Five personality traits, needs, and values based on the text in tweets from their individual timelines. Here, the output generated is referred to as the IBM Watson Personality Insight data.

On IBM Watson Developer Cloud, IBM offers the Personality Insights service through an API. This service uses linguistic analytics to infer individuals' characteristics such as Big Five personality traits, needs, and values from text. An example of the Watson Personality Insight data can be found in Figure 13. Figure 13 depicts Watson Personality Insight data in as sunburst chart visualization. This sample output is based on a 15,128-word analysis for Oprah Winfrey. Similar output (without the visualization) is generated for Katy Perry, Bill Gates, and the sample of followers.

IBM Watson Personality Insight service employs GloVe, an open-source word-embedding technique (Pennington, Socher, and Manning, 2014). The GloVe algorithm is similar in approach to that employed by Schwartz et al. (2013) and Plank and Hovy (2015). According to Schwartz et al. (2013), "these open-vocabulary methods provide an unobtrusive and non-reactive window into the social and psychological characteristics of people."

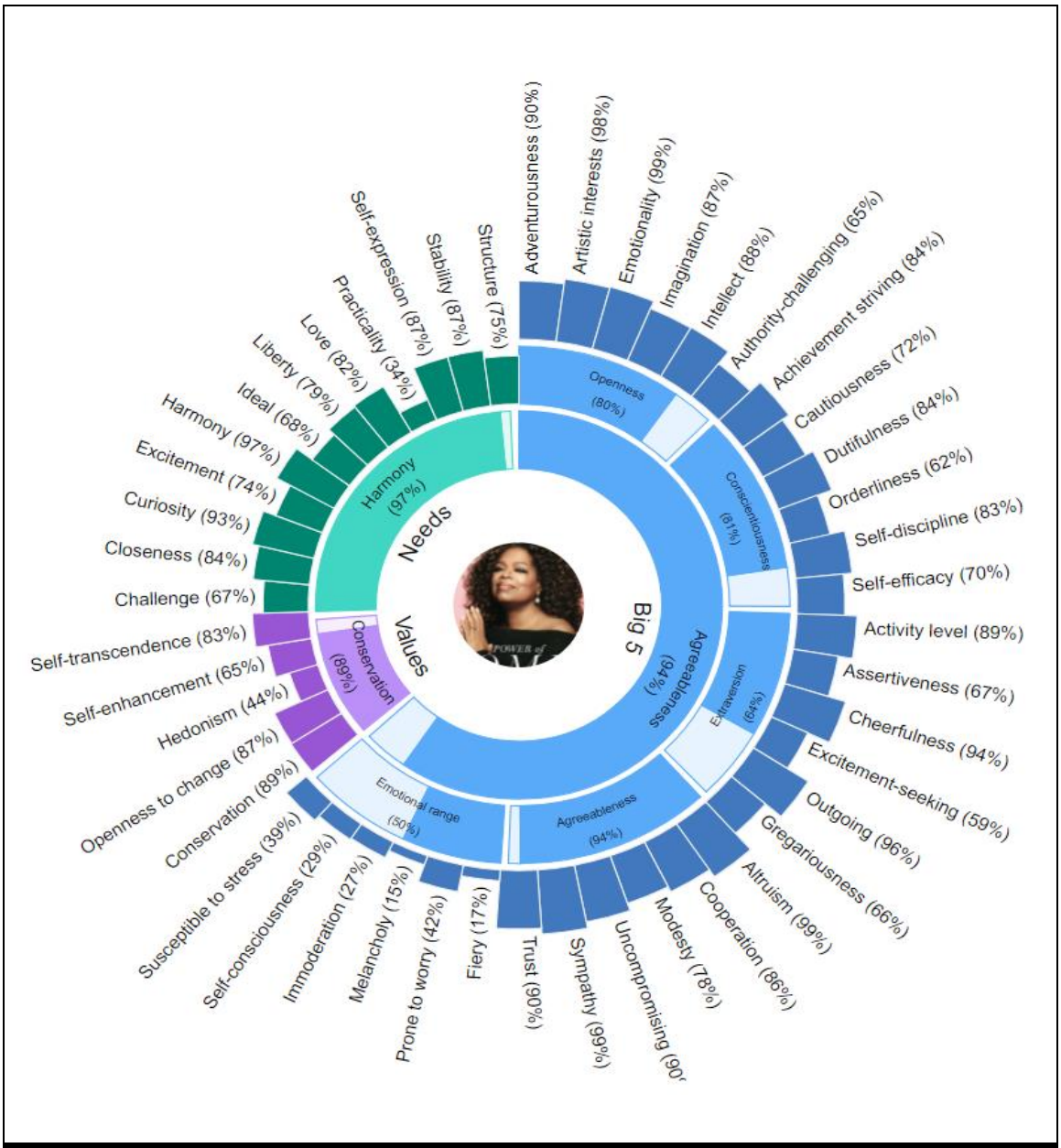

Figure 13. Sunburst Chart Visualization of Personality Insights Data

Prior to processing tweets in IBM Watson Personality Insights service, each of the CSV files was loaded into a text file. Using Python, the Personality Insights API was engaged, and tweets were inputted with specifications for analysis and output. Personality Insights data is synthesized from the Twitter data. Twitter data from each user is entered one at a time. Each timeline of tweets in a text file was analyzed, and the IBM Watson Personality Insight service inferences were stored in a CSV file. For a given Twitter leader and each of their followers, their Big Five personality traits, values, and needs deciphered from their tweets were inferred.

The IBM Watson Personality Insight data is further analyzed. The IBM Watson Personality Insights data is used to compare leaders' and their followers' Big Five personality traits, values, and needs. For 649 of Katy Perry's and 700 of Bill Gates's followers, the values are aggerated as mean. Subsequently, the various comparisons were performed.

4.3. Phase III: Understanding Twitter Follower Characteristics and Behaviors

Drawing from the focus group discussions in Phase I, a research model was developed and tested in this Phase III. The development of this model is explained in Chapter V (in the section associated with Phase III results). Using data from the focus group discussions, the following follower characteristics were identified: personal sense of power, eCourage, and social capital. Also, using data from focus group discussions, the following follower behaviors were identified: voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors. The relationship between follower characteristics and

follower behaviors was analyzed. The analysis controls for intensity of Twitter usage and perceived anonymity. The definitions for all of the constructs discussed here are provided in Chapter III which is on theoretical foundations.

4.3.1. Survey Method

In Phase III, based on the research model (see Figure 15), the survey method was employed to capture data for model testing. A survey instrument was created. This instrument was pretested and pilot-tested. Once the instrument was validated, a large-scaled survey was conducted for data collection.

Here, the objective was to understand and relate the Twitter followers' characteristics and behaviors. It seems appropriate to collect responses from general Twitter users in the general population. The survey questionnaire was administered to only Twitter users in the United States.

4.3.2. Instrument Construction and Pretest

The characteristic and behavioral constructs had been previously examined in empirical studies. Using existing survey instruments from those empirical studies, here, the survey instrument was created. In the questionnaire, the original survey items were modified for the Twitter context.

The survey instrument measured Twitter followers' characteristics and behaviors. In addition to the follower characteristics and follower behaviors, the survey items were used to measure intensity of Twitter usage and perceived anonymity which were

controlled for in the analysis. The survey items for personal sense of power are based on the items from Anderson et al. (2012), those for eCourage are based on the items from Woodard and Pury (2007), those for social capital are based on the items from Ellison et al. (2007), those for voice and helping are based on the items from Van Dyne and LePine (1998), those for empowering behaviors are based on the items from Speer and Peterson (2000), and those for disempowering behaviors are based on the items from Faulkner (2001). Lastly, the survey items for Twitter usage and perceived anonymity were from Ellison et al. (2007) and Ayyagari, Grover, and Purvis (2011), respectively.

In conducting the survey, data was collected on central constructs, control constructs, and demographics. These central constructs include the following: sense of power, eCourage, social capital, voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors. The control constructs were intensity of Twitter usage and perceived anonymity. Again, the details on the constructs can be found in Chapter III on theoretical foundations. In Appendix A, the original items, the modified time used in the pre-test and pilot test, and the details of the large-scale study can be found. Sense of power was measured with items 1–4. The construct eCourage was measured with items 5–8. Social capital was measured with items 8–12. Voice was measured with items 13–16. Helping was measured with items 17–20. Empowering behaviors were measured with items 21–24. Disempowering behaviors were measured with items 25–29. Intensity of Twitter usage was measured with items 30–33. Perceived anonymity was measured with

items 34–37. The measurements of the constructs reflect the constructs. Demographics were measured with items 38–41 capturing age, gender, and work experience.

For face validity and content validity, the instrument was pretested with fellow researchers. The five experts which included professors and doctoral students reviewed the instrument and provided feedback. Using the feedback from the experts, the survey instrument was revised and refined. The pretest was followed by a pilot test.

4.3.3. Pilot Test

The survey instrument was pilot tested on Amazon Mechanical Turk. Thirty Twitter users were paid $5 each to complete the survey. After the survey closed, the data was inspected for qualitative anomalies using box-and-whiskers plots, and the data was modeled using PLS-SEM for quantitative anomalies. Some of the items for disempowering behaviors were not reliable as they had a huge spread in the box-and-whiskers plots. Also, these items did not load well in the PLS-SEM model. These items for disempowering behaviors were reviewed and revised in deep discussion with the experts. After reaching an agreement on the finalized instrument, steps were taken to commence the full-scale study and a large-scale survey was undertaken.

4.3.4. Large-Scale Survey

The finalized survey instrument was administered on Amazon Mechanical Turk (See Appendix A for the instrument.). A total of 303 responses were collected. In approximately an hour, the survey was completed. Due to the short timeframe of data

collection and use of a single batch for data collection requesting unique respondents, the responses would likely be unique; that is, without retakes from the same Amazon Mechanical Turker. Similarly, the pilot test was administered on Amazon Mechanical Turk, and the following criteria were utilized for the large-scale survey:

- Twitter account holder is equal to true.
- Location is United States.
- HIT approval rate for all requesters' HITs is greater than 95%.

Setting the Twitter account holder equal to true requires meeting this qualification prior to taking this survey. It ensures that respondents who are taking the survey are qualified as Twitter accounts holders; therefore, they are users of Twitter. In this research, the scope is limited to only Twitter users in the United States. Again, it is assumed that this makes it difficult for individuals outside the United States to game the system, the Amazon Mechanical Turk, as it would be too difficult for them to acquire the Twitter account holder credential just for the sake of taking the survey. By setting the location to United States, only those who qualify as located in the United States are permitted to take the survey. This criterion prevents users outside the United States from completing the questionnaire. This eliminates users from other countries, and the likelihood of gaming the system. These precautions were taken to avoid anomalies (e.g., avoiding professional survey respondents who are not associated with Twitter) in the data collection process.

People tried to circumvent the set Amazon Mechanical Turk requirements to take the survey in this research. On online discussion boards, surprisingly, people engaged in discussion on how to take the survey used in this research and how to acquire the credentials (e.g., Twitter account holder) for the survey in this study. Those who tried to circumvent the set Amazon Mechanical Turk failed. The criteria appear to have worked as people posted about their inability to acquire the Amazon Mechanical Turk credentials. Turkers who had the credentials are the ones who took the survey.

Human intelligence task (HIT) approval rate is the percentage of prior requesters that have approved HITs for a participant on Amazon Mechanical Turk. For example, if a participant completes 50 HITs and their work was rejected 5 times in the past, their approval rate is 90%. With lower than 90%, they would be disqualified from participating in the survey. Here, the HIT approval rate was used to ensure trustworthiness of the qualifications on Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Each participant was paid $5 for completing the survey, and Amazon Mechanical Turk charged $2.05 for utilizing their service for each participant. Of the 303 participants, 143 were male (47%) and 160 were female (53%) (Table 11). Almost an equal number of men and women participated in the survey. Most of the survey population is between 24-44 totaling 220 (72%) (Table 12). A few age brackets contain the majority of the Twitter users, and it is notable that only 19 participants (6%) are in the 18-24 bracket as one would intuitively expect more young users of an emerging technology like Twitter.

Table 11. Survey Population Gender		
Gender	**Count**	**Percent (rounded)**
Male Female Other	143 160 0	47% 53% 0%
Total	303	100%

Table 12. Survey Population Age		
Age	**Count**	**Percent (rounded)**
18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+	19 125 95 35 20 9	6% 41% 31% 12% 7% 3%
Total	303	100%

The surveyed Twitter population has the following education: 1) 0 (0%) with less than high school diploma, 35 (12%) with high school degrees or equivalent, 72 (24%)

with some college (no degree), 38 (13%) with associate degree, 126 (42%) with bachelor's degree, 26 (9%) with master's degree, 5 (2%) with professional degree, and 1 (0%) with the doctorate (Table 13). While the surveyed population had none with less than a high school diploma, the largest number of people had a bachelor's degree.

Table 13. Survey Population Education

Education	**Count**	**Percent (rounded)**
Less than a high school diploma	0	0%
High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	35	12%
Some college, no degree	72	24%
Associate degree (e.g., AA, AS)	38	13%
Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)	126	42%
Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEd)	26	9%
Professional degree (e.g., MD, DDS, DVM, JD)	5	2%
Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD)	1	0%
Total	303	100%

The surveyed Twitter population has a considerable amount of work experience with 147 participants (49%) having more than 16 years. As for the other participants' work experience, there are 46 (15%) with 1-5 years, 58 (19%) with 6-10 years and 51 (17%) with 10-15 years of work experience. Surprisingly, on the low end with no years

of work experience, there is only one participant. Work experience is displayed in Table 14.

Table 14. Survey Population Work Experience		
Work Experience (in years)	**Count**	**Percent (rounded)**
0 1-5 6-10 11-15 16+	1 46 58 51 147	0% 15% 19% 17% 49%
Total	303	100%

4.3.5. PLS-SEM Method and Analysis

Subsequently, the research model is tested (see Figure 15 in Chapter V on results). That is, the relationship between Twitter followers' characteristics and their Twitter followers' behaviors are examined. With PLS-SEM using SmartPLS 2.0M3 (Ringle, Wende, and Will, 2005), the relationships between followers' characteristics and their Twitter behaviors were analyzed. In using PLS-SEM, intensity of Twitter usage and perceived anonymity were controlled and accounted for in the analysis.

PLS-SEM is a well-accepted method for testing such relationships (Matthews, Hair, and Matthews, 2018). According to Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt. (2012), for

exploratory inquiries, PLS-SEM is appropriate. Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014) recommend a sample size greater than 10 times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular construct in the structural model. The number of cases, 303, meets the PLS-SEM criteria of a sample size. Wong (2013) provided standard guidelines for analysis. Maximum number of iterations was set to 300. The bootstrapping sample size was set to 5,000.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

5.1. Phase I: A Preliminary Conceptualization of Twitter's ITE Followership

A priori, drawing from followership literature, a process of leader-follower interaction on social media platforms is posited. As discussed earlier in Chapter II and III on literature review and theoretical foundations, respectively, there is evidence to support that the leader-follower interaction is ongoing and it is different on social media platforms compared to other social settings (e.g., organizations).

Unlike other social settings (e.g., organizations), on social medial platforms, the followers often do not directly interact with the leader (social media influencer), a person who is followed on a social media platform. The interactions between the leader and the follower, who is a person following the leader, occur on the social media platform. This interaction involves a social media platform with the creation and exchange of user generated content. On Twitter, the followers read tweets and follow, and the leaders have a following, represent themselves in the social media context, and post the tweets.

In the context of a social media platform such as Twitter, people represent themselves through words, content, and actions on the platform which is a connectionist system. Thus, people engage in following and leading in a social and relational process. And, they play a role in the system.

5.1.1. Focus Group Results: Narrative of Twitter Followership

Drawing from the constructionist lens (Figure 9) and using the data from the focus groups, a basic conceptualization of Twitter followership is proposed (Figure 14). A narrative analysis of Twitter users' stories lends itself to this conceptualization. This analysis generated rich insights into self-representation and the relational dynamics associated with Twitter followership. Support is found for the assumptions made in Chapter III.

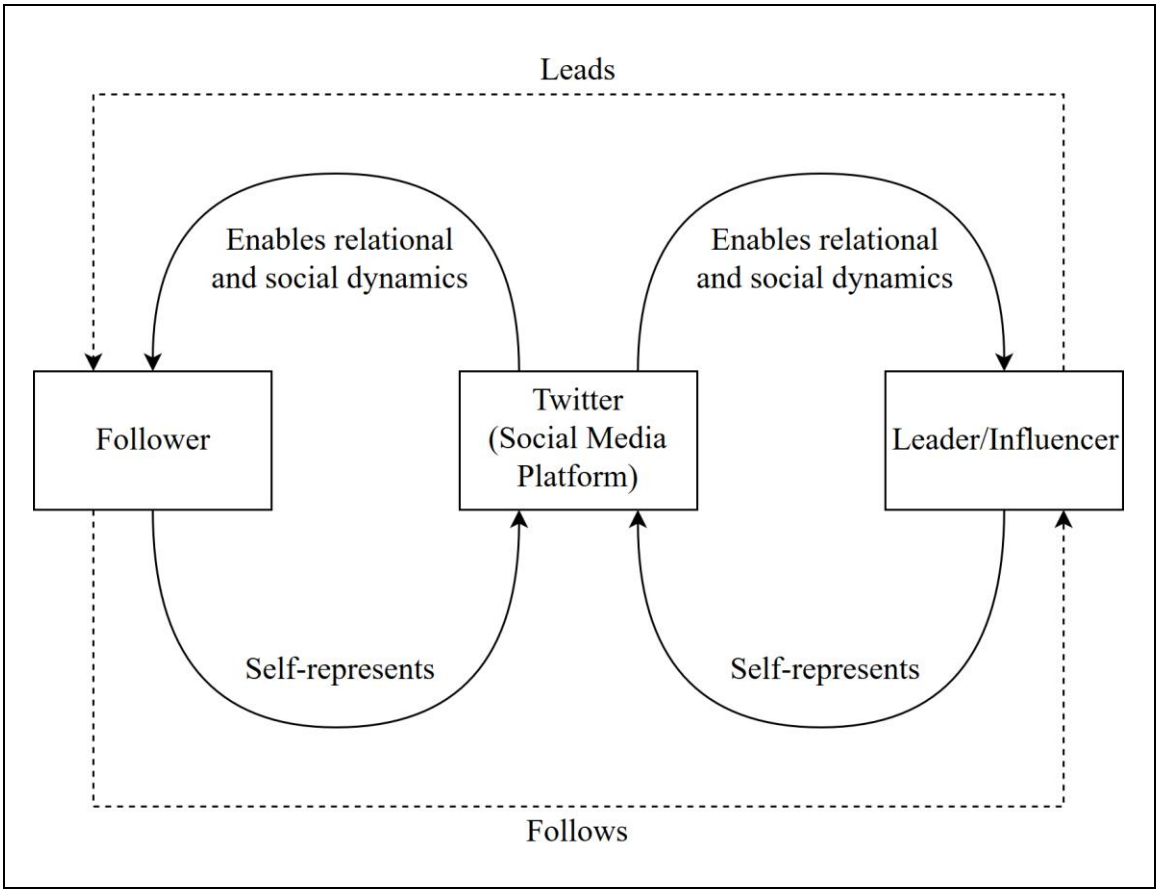

Figure 14. Process of Twitter Leader-Follower Interaction

The process of followership/leadership is present on Twitter (assumption #1). The narratives support this assumption. The narratives reveal that Twitter users are following other Twitter users. One user described her following:

> Twitter's actually became more entertaining, believe it or not, based on my views or beliefs. I'm pretty sure everyone can guess why. Our Twitter-in-chief, Donald Trump, has made Twitter much more entertaining to use. It's just that some of the stuff that you can find on Twitter is hilarious. It's just funny just to sit back and watch some stuff. When I do actually get off from my side of Twitter, I just go on to like the general thing with Twitter and just look at some of the stuff they say. It is hilarious. That's why I get some of my laughing done, my laughing at. It's funny just to... you know just Twitter itself. And so, it hasn't swayed me to use Twitter less, if anything more, because it's a good stress reliever just to sit back and laugh and to laugh at some people.

Leader-follower interaction is ongoing on social media platforms (assumption #2). Narratives illustrate an ongoing leader-follower interaction. Twitter users have narratives as followers and narratives as leaders. One Twitter user described the effect of tweeting and the resulting behavior of followers on Twitter:

> Me and my brother, we can be having a discussion about a certain topic and someone will just come from nowhere and just started acting crazy and they be like, "Well, I don't feel that." "Well, this is not your conversation."

In leader-follower interaction, Twitter users (as leaders and followers) engage in self-representation and in relational and social dynamics. In the narratives, among Twitter users, self-representation is present. This self-representation involves symbolic behaviors enacted by the Twitter user. Users are careful in constructing themselves on Twitter.

Twitter is shaping how this self-representation happens on the platform. One person explains the difficulty with self-expression and its construction on Twitter.

> You never realize how creative you can be until you're only given 140 characters [Laughter]. You never know how easily you can say something until you have a limit. I need to get this out, but I want to use this platform to say it. So, how am I going to say it?

Another person tells about the way that they represent themselves on Twitter based on their affective intentions.

> I'll put or share things like about nature that are pretty. I try to do positive things or nothing. I like a lot of humor on there too. That's what I decide. Nothing that's gonna hurt anybody or... I don't like to say things that are confrontational. I don't like to get into fights on there at all. So, I don't put anything confrontational on there.

Followers have power and influence. (Assumption #3). One user describes her interaction with her follower who challenged and influenced her after she posted on Twitter.

> I have shared something and someone was not aware of and so then they may react to that and delve into it for more information and I have actually seen where they come back to me and say hey well this article wasn't particularly correct or not that it wasn't correct but wasn't completely um forthcoming and so here's some other details so I had notice that people have challenged me on things and I actually appreciate that.

This follower power shaped the relational and social dynamics in the follower-leader interactions. These relational and social dynamics are enabled by Twitter. One Twitter user shared the relational and social dynamics in describing her experience:

> Sometimes, I post picture of myself. They like it, tweet it, and stuff like that because it's like you know, it's something important and whenever. Maybe it's like my birthday or something like that. Sometimes, I tweet things, and people agree to it. And, so, they all retweet it and stuff like that.

The Twitter followers are co-creators in the followership process (assumption #4). Narratives show Twitter users as both followers as co-creators. Their words have influence. One user described her sense of power as a co-creator.

> When I see a retweet or someone asks me For something on Twitter, it's refreshing. It's like, "Oh yeah, they're taking my opinion or something into consideration and they validate me by liking what I like verbatim. They didn't even take the time to change what I said into their words. They just took my words exactly for how they felt." So, I think it is influential in a way.

Twitter followers are role players in the followership process (assumption #5). There are a variety of behaviors exhibited by Twitter users playing a role. One Twitter user described Twitter roles as aggressive or passive.

> Twitter is a great way to have an ego about yourself. So, if you want to be known as someone more aggressive, you can have that ego by being aggressive. But, probably, I will take that person as passive. So . . .

Other users claimed that Twitter alters their normal social behaviors. Twitter users explained shifts in their behaviors, and, shifts in their role. One user described these shifts as follows:

> I'm a pretty talkative person. But, on Twitter, I'm not that talkative because I don't make personal posts. I do a lot of retweeting. I do post every now and then just something.

And, some users play a role through their actions. They confront issues and address them directly. One Twitter user described her use of Twitter to draw attention to an issue.

> I was at Walmart one day, and literally, there was a guy in front of me, and he was just trying to load money on a prepaid card. All of a sudden, these loss prevention officers just swarmed him. They took a photo of his ID and his debit card. And, I was like what the hell Walmart. I was on Twitter . . . I will definitely speak out about that type of thing. If they know what's good for them, they will respond quickly. And, they generally do.

Twitter users are both followers and leaders as the predominant case. In the narratives, it is not clear if the user's role is involved only in followership, or if they also include leadership as some have followers. A Twitter user could exist with zero followers, but this is an unlikely as well as not evident in the narratives. It is clear that followers play a role.

5.1.1.1. Validity and Trustworthiness

As for validity and trustworthiness, in Phase I, this research provides disclosure based on the recommendations in Earthy and Cronin (2008). According to earthy and

Cronin (20008), “the starting point for evaluating the credibility of a narrative analysis must be an explicit acknowledgement by the researcher that their analysis is the production of particular discourses or theoretical frameworks” (Earthy and Cronin, 2008, p. 437). Following this recommendation, this research acknowledges the following: 1) the researcher as interpreter draws from the constructionist lens for followership research and 2) the narrative analysis is influenced by the social identity theory of leadership discourses. Furthermore, this interpretation is dependent on the position of the researcher engaging in the interpretation; thereby, it rejects and dismisses the criteria for validity based on realist assumptions. As such, a different theoretical framework might produce a different analysis. No claims are made that the interpretation is any more truthful than another.

5.1.2. Focus Group Results: Emergent Conceptual Model

Informed by the focus group discussions, constructs derived were sense of power, eCourage, social capital, voice, helping, empowerment behaviors, and disempowerment behaviors. The derived constructs were organized as followers’ characteristics or follower/followership behaviors using the framework method. As described in stage 5 of the framework method in section 4.1.3., an analytical framework was applied. It was not developed specifically for the present study. Here, the role-based lens was applied as the framework. The derived constructs are organized with the role-based lens, the framework, as either follower characteristics or follower behaviors. And, the role-based lens imposes a causal structure with constructs associated with followers’ characteristics

influencing the constructs associated with follower/followership behaviors as depicted in Figure 12 (in Chapter III on theoretical foundations).

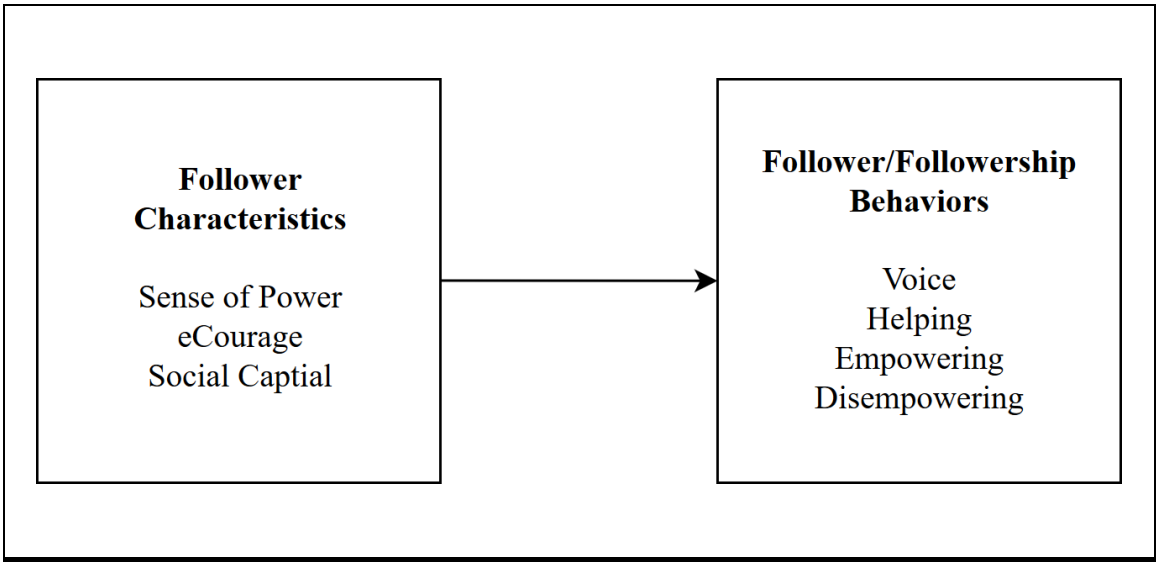

Figure 15. Phase III - Revised Conceptual Model

5.1.2.1. Deriving the Constructs and Imposing the Framework

The research model (Figure 15) shows the relationships between followership characteristics (sense of power, eCourage, and social capital) and follower/followership behaviors (voice, helping, empowerment behaviors, and disempowerment behaviors). To arrive at the model, the focus group discussion transcripts were coded in Dedoose, the codes were charted into the framework matrix (Table 15 and Table 16), prominent constructs were synthesized, and the role-based lens as the analytical framework was applied to impose causal structure.

Table 15. Categories of Characteristics with Codes		
Sense of Power	**eCourage**	**Social Capital**
Information Access Judgement Keeping-up Functionality Options Follow-up	Willful action Separation Privacy Filter/no filter Confrontation Fear	Followers Friends Family Keeping-in-touch Familiar Network Pressure Relevance Bond

Table 16. Categories of Behaviors with Codes			
Voice	**Helping**	**Empowering Behaviors**	**Disempowering Behaviors**
Espousing Opinionating Conflicting Challenging Venting Objecting	Entertaining Affiliating Teaching Confirming Validating Tagging Defending	Following Retweeting Liking Sharing Incentivizing Endorsing Advocating Motivating Affirming	Unfollowing Avoiding Ignoring Blocking Trolling Cyberbullying Trash-talking

Twitter users have a personal sense of power. They are courageous. And, they have social capital. Twitter users voice their opinions in relation to their leaders by

challenging. Twitter users help their followers by affiliative promotion. Twitter users also engage or disengage from their leaders; thereby, they empower or disempower their leaders. For detailed descriptions of Twitter users' characteristics and behaviors, see Chapter III on theoretical foundations.

Table 17 shows 50 different codes identified. Table 17 provides a list of the codes and the frequency count. The codes were segmented into categories--sense of power, eCourage, social capital, voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors. As noted above, these categories were sorted as follower characteristics or follower behaviors.

Table 17. List of Codes and Frequency Counts

Code	Frequency Count	Code	Frequency Count
Information access	72	Opinionating	20
Entertaining	64	Conflicting	18
Following	56	Options	17
Willful action	46	Pressure	15
Judgement	43	Avoiding	14
Retweeting	38	Ignoring	14
Separation	37	Challenging	13
Keeping-up	34	Teaching	11
Liking	33	Objecting	11
Affiliating	31	Venting	11
Followers	29	Blocking	10
Privacy	29	Endorsing	9
Family	27	Confirming	9
Friends	27	Validating	9
Sharing	27	Relevance	8

Table 17. List of Codes and Frequency Counts (Continued)			
Code	**Frequency Count**	**Code**	**Frequency Count**
Keeping-in-touch	26	Tagging	8
Familiar	24	Follow-up	7
Filter/no filter	24	Cyberbullying	7
Functionality	23	Trolling	7
Confrontation	23	Advocating	7
Espousing	22	Motivating	7
Network	21	Affirming	6
Fear	20	Defending	6
Unfollowing	20	Bond	5
Incentivizing	20	Trash-talking	2

5.1.2.2. Hypotheses

In Phase III, the research is exploratory. There is no extant followership literature that explicates the role of followers and the relationships between the derived constructs in the research model above (Figure 15). Based on the causal structure (Figure 12), a set of hypotheses is posited which is tested in Phase III. Again, the role-based causal structure directs that followers' characteristics influence the followers' behaviors in their role as followers.

If people have a sense of power, it may influence their role-based behaviors in voicing, helping, empowering others, and disempowering others. Therefore, this research explores and examines the relationship between sense of power and the followers' behaviors and tests hypotheses 1-4 that are unexplored in extant literature.

- *Hypothesis 1: Sense of power leads to voicing behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 2: Sense of power leads to helping behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 3: Sense of power leads to empowering behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 4: Sense of power leads to disempowering behaviors.*

Also, if people have eCourage, it may influence their role-based behaviors in voicing, helping, empowering others, and disempowering others. Therefore, this research explores and examines the relationship between eCourage and the followers' behaviors and tests hypotheses 5-8 which are unexplored in extant literature.

- *Hypothesis 5: eCourage leads to voicing behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 6: eCourage leads to helping behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 7: eCourage leads to empowering behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 8: eCourage leads to disempowering behaviors.*

Lastly, if people have social capital, it may influence their role-based behaviors in voicing, helping, empowering others, and disempowering others. Therefore, this research explores and examines the relationship between social capital and the followers' behaviors and tests hypotheses 9-12 which are unexplored in extant literature.

- *Hypothesis 9: Social capital leads to voicing behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 10: Social capital leads to helping behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 11: Social capital leads to empowering behaviors.*
- *Hypothesis 12: Social capital leads to disempowering behaviors.*

5.2. Phase II: Examination of Social Media Identities of Leaders and Followers

The output from the IBM Watson's Personality Insights service is a score, a percentile for each identity characteristic: personality, values, and needs. For example, a percentile of 32.19% for the personality characteristic extraversion indicates that a Twitter user's score for that characteristic is in the 32.19th percentile. This output, the scores, are displayed in Tables 18-25. In Tables 18-25, the scores for Katy Perry (K), Katy Perry's followers (F_1), Bill Gates (B), and Bill Gates' followers (F_2) are shown. The scores of the followers (F_1 and F_2) are mean values for the sampled followers.

To understand the scores in Tables 18-25, it is important to understand the mean absolute error (MEA). IBM conducted a validation study for their IBM Watson's Personality Insights service, and they assessed the accuracy of Watson's inferred characteristic scores. IBM collected Twitter feeds from 1,500 to 2,000 participants for all characteristics, and they compared these scores with the survey-based scores for the Twitter users. MEA measures the average of the absolute value difference between actual and predicted values. The actual value is the score obtained through the survey. The predicted value is the score that is produced by the IBM Watson's Personality Insights service. A 0 MAE means no error, and the predicted value is the exactly the same as the actual value. The MAE is 0.12 or 12% for the Big Five personality dimensions, 0.11 or 11% for needs, and 0.11 or 11% for values. Based on IBM's validation study, the predicted values were found to be off differing by 12% or 11% from the actual values on

average. Therefore, here, this research uses 12% and 11% as cut-off values for assessing the comparison between the leaders' and followers' scores.

To understand the scores in Tables 18-25, it is also important to understand the average correlation. The average correlation measures the interdependence of two variables, where correlation is between -1 and 1. IBM's validation study examined the average correlation between the inferred and actual values. IBM's validation study found that the average correlation is 0.33 for the Big Five personality dimensions, 0.22 for needs, and 0.24 for values. Therefore, here, the inferred values are assumed to have a positive linear relationship with the actual values of the Twitter users.

When examining the output, the MAE was used to account for the margin of error, and it is used as the cutoff. The relationships identified here are not causal. This cut-off acts as means to describe the output. In the present study, the cutoff for the Big Five personality dimensions is 12%. The cutoff for needs is 11%. And, the cutoff for values is 11%.

5.2.1. Descriptive Statistics: Big Five Personality

Table 18 and Table 19 shows Katy Perry's (K) and Bill Gates' (B) scores for the Big Five personality dimensions respectively. Table 18 and Table 19 also illustrate the mean difference between the Big Five personality dimensions of Katy Perry and Bill Gates and their followers.

Table 18. Personalities of Katy Perry and her Average Follower
Legend: A=Agreeableness; C= Conscientiousness; E=Extraversion; N= Neuroticism; O=Openness

	A	C	E	N	O
Katy Perry (K)	18.24%	45.13%	32.19%	44.83%	7.20%
Followers' Average (F_1)	24.67%	40.69%	27.43%	40.53%	14.05%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_1\text{-}K\rvert$	6.43%	4.44%	4.77%	4.29%	6.85%

Table 19. Personalities of Bill Gates and his Average Follower
Legend: A=Agreeableness; C= Conscientiousness; E=Extraversion; N= Neuroticism; O=Openness

	A	C	E	N	O
Bill Gates (B)	36.33%	48.53%	25.72%	53.57%	39.25%
Followers' Average (F_2)	25.14%	46.46%	29.64%	52.46%	22.95%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_2\text{-}B\rvert$	11.20%	2.08%	3.92%	1.10%	16.30%

In Table 18, Katy Perry did not differ more than 12% (cutoff) across any of the Big Five personality dimensions in relation to her followers. Katy Perry is similar to her

followers. That is, Katy Perry is as agreeable, conscientious, extraverted, neurotic as her followers are, and embraces openness as much as her followers do.

In Table 19, Bill Gates did not differ more than 12% (cutoff) across four of the Big Five personality dimensions in relation to his followers. In one personality dimension, openness, Bill Gates is slightly different from his followers. However, overall, Bill Gates is similar to his followers. That is, Bill Gates is as agreeable, conscientious, extraverted, and neurotic as his followers. But, his openness slightly deviates from that of his followers.

There is strong evidence for an inference that leaders' personalities are like that of their followers. Katy Perry matches across all Big Five personality dimensions. Bill Gates also matches across all but one of the Big Five personality dimensions.

5.2.2. Descriptive Statistics: Needs

Table 20 and Table 21 show scores for Katy Perry's (K) needs. These tables also depict the mean difference between the needs of Katy Perry and her followers. Table 22 and Table 23 show scores for Bill Gates' (B) needs. These tables also depict the mean difference between the needs of Bill Gates and his followers.

In Table 20, Katy Perry did not differ more than 11% (cutoff) across liberty, love, practicality, and self-expression in relation to her followers. In Table 21, Katy Perry did not differ more than 11% (cutoff) across structure, closeness, and curiosity in relation to her follower. Excitement is on the borderline of the cutoff, and she shares in excitement with her followers. Katy Perry only differed, based on the 11% (cutoff), in terms of

idealism, stability, challenge, and harmony. Nevertheless, Katy Perry is still very similar to her followers in terms of the majority of her needs. To be specific, 75% of her needs are approximately the same as her followers' needs while she differs only on 25% of her needs when compared to them. Katy Perry's differences in her needs compared to her followers' needs are minute within only few percentage points from the cutoff.

Table 20. Needs of Katy Perry and her Average Follower (Part 1)
Legend: Li=Liberty; I=Ideal; Lo=Love; P=Practicality; Se=Self-expression; St=Stability

	Li	I	Lo	P	Se	St
Katy Perry (K)	73.08%	72.96%	26.17%	47.15%	51.28%	13.47%
Followers' Average (F_1)	73.00%	85.07%	33.48%	56.90%	57.20%	26.81%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_1\text{-}K\rvert$	0.08%	12.11%	7.31%	9.75%	5.92%	13.34%

Table 21. Needs of Katy Perry and her Average Follower (Part 2)
Legend: S=Structure; Ch=Challenge; Cl=Closeness; Cu=Curiosity; E=Excitement; H=Harmony

	S	Ch	Cl	Cu	E	H
Katy Perry (K)	1.35%	25.84%	33.45%	58.12%	63.88%	7.65%
Followers' Average (F_1)	11.42%	40.46%	43.63%	62.49%	75.36%	23.47%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_1\text{-}K\rvert$	10.07%	14.61%	10.18%	4.37%	11.48%	15.82%

In Table 22, Bill Gates did not differ more than 11% (cutoff) across liberty and love in relation to his followers. In Table 23, Bill Gates did not differ more than 11% (cutoff) across structure, and harmony in relation to his followers. Bill Gates differed from his followers by 11% (cutoff) in terms of idealism, practicality, stability, challenge, closeness, curiosity, and excitement. Bill Gates only slightly from his followers, based on the 11% (cutoff), in terms of self-expression. Bill Gates shares some common needs with his followers. When compared to his followers, 33% of his needs are the same as his followers' needs while 66 % of his needs are not the same as his followers' needs.

There is some evidence here for an inference that leaders' needs are like that of their followers. Katy Perry matches with her followers across 75% of the needs, and Bill Gates matches with his followers across 33% of the needs.

Table 22. Needs of Bill Gates and his Average Follower (Part 1)
Legend: Li=Liberty; I=Ideal; Lo=Love; P=Practicality; Se=Self-expression; St=Stability

	Li	I	Lo	P	Se	St
Bill Gates (B)	59.55%	58.53%	34.34%	32.35%	36.55%	14.64%
Followers' Average (F_2)	68.24%	83.56%	32.30%	58.97%	49.66%	34.76%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_2\text{-}B\rvert$	8.69%	25.03%	2.04%	26.61%	13.11%	20.12%

Table 23. Needs of Bill Gates and his Average Follower (Part 2) Legend: S=Structure; Ch=Challenge; Cl=Closeness; Cu=Curiosity; E=Excitement; H=Harmony						
	S	Ch	Cl	Cu	E	H
Bill Gates(B)	8.23%	22.35%	11.72%	82.96%	43.40%	22.88%
Followers' Average (F_2)	19.60%	43.69%	36.89%	65.69%	70.17%	29.50%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_2 - B \rvert$	11.36%	21.34%	25.17%	17.28%	26.77%	6.62%

5.2.3. Descriptive Statistics: Values

Table 24 and Table 25 show Katy Perry's (K) and Bill Gates' (B) scores for the values, respectively. Table 24 and Table 25 also illustrate the mean difference between the values of Katy Perry and Bill Gates and their followers.

In Table 24, Katy Perry did not differ more than 11% (cutoff) across conservation, hedonism, openness to change, or enhancement in relation to her followers. Katy Perry differed only slightly, based on the 11% (cutoff), in terms of transcendence. Overall, Katy Perry is similar to her followers in terms of her values.

In Table 25, Bill Gates did not differ more than 11% (cutoff) across openness to change and transcendence in relation to his followers. Bill Gates notably different, based

on the 11% (cutoff), in terms of conservation, hedonism, and enhancement. Bill Gates differs from his followers in terms of three of the five values.

Table 24. Values of Katy Perry and her Average Follower
Legend: C=Conservation; H=Hedonism; O=Openness to Change; E=Enhancement; T=Transcendence

	C	H	O	E	T
Katy Perry (K)	19.83%	65.67%	49.88%	41.44%	14.71%
Followers' Average (F_1)	29.36%	70.76%	58.22%	51.72%	28.93%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_1\text{-}K\rvert$	9.53%	5.09%	8.34%	10.28%	14.22%

Table 25. Values of Bill Gates and his Average Follower
Legend: C=Conservation; H=Hedonism; O=Openness to Change; E=Enhancement; T=Transcendence

	C	H	O	E	T
Bill Gates (B)	6.58%	10.82%	42.33%	16.99%	19.48%
Followers Average (F_2)	27.81%	59.89%	53.02%	46.12%	23.38%
Mean Difference $\lvert F_2\text{-}B\rvert$	21.23%	49.08%	10.68%	29.13%	3.90%

There is some evidence for inferring that leaders' values are like those of their followers. Katy Perry matches with her followers across 80% of the values, and Bill Gates matches with his followers across 40% of the values.

Overall, Katy Perry is like her followers in 77% of the 22 identity dimensions or 17 dimensions. This is indicative of Katy Perry being like her followers. And, Bill Gates matches with his followers in 46% of the 22 identity dimensions or 10 dimensions. This suggests that Bill Gates shares some identity with his followers, but he is independent of his followers in other ways. It is noteworthy that in terms of his personality, however, he is a lot like his followers as he matches with them across 80% of the personality dimensions. The similarity is to a lesser extent in terms of needs (33%) and values (50%).

5.3. Phase III: Relationship between Followers' Characteristics and their Behaviors

In Phase III, the examination of Twitter followership was guided by the role-based lens. The view through the role-based lens is illustrated in Figure 10 (in Chapter III on theoretical foundations). In Phase III, the scope was limited to the followers' characteristics and follower/followership behaviors. Utilizing the data from the focus group discussions (from Phase I), constructs associated with followers' characteristics and follower/followership behaviors were derived. To arrive at the research model (Figure 15), this research organizes the derived constructs based on the causal structure outlined in extant research, the role-based lens. That is, by imposing the causal structure of the role-based lens, the research model is proposed. The research model was tested

using survey data (also collected in Phase III) with PLS-SEM as the method for analysis. The results from the model testing are summarized in Figure 18.

5.3.1. Measurement Model: Reliability and Validity

To ensure rigor, reliability and validity are assessed. Prior to the survey, a pre-test and a pilot were employed to enhance the reliability and the validity. The questionnaire presented the items in random order to address common method bias. Also, three or more items were used to measure a construct.

A few items were dropped from the model. For eCourage, one of the four items (item 8) did not load properly; hence, Item 8 was dropped from the model. The construct Therefore, eCourage was modeled with three items (items 5, 6, and 7). For disempowering behaviors, three of the five items (items 26, 27, and 30) did not load properly; hence, the construct was modeled with two items (items 28 and 29). It is not unusual to model with two items. Research suggests retaining "a factor with only two items if the items are highly correlated (i.e., $r > .70$) and relatively uncorrelated with other variables," according to Worthington and Whittaker (2006, p. 821). The correlation (r) for items 28 and 29 is 0.76. Therefore, modeling with two items is appropriate.

Reliability and validity were evaluated. Table 26 lists the composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and AVE. Composite reliability is greater than 0.70, the cutoff value. Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7 further supporting reliability.

For convergent validity, the factor loadings were checked and compared against the 0.70 recommended value (Table 28), and AVE was assessed which is greater than 0.5

for all of the constructs (Table 26). For discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE was computed, and it is greater than the inter-construct correlations (Table 27).

Common method bias was assessed using Harman's single factor test. Harman's single factor test was conducted using SPSS. Factor analysis was employed per Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2013). All the factors were included in the model, and the model constrained the extraction to one factor. The solution was not rotated. 37% of the variance is explained by the one factor. The common threshold is 50%, and 37% is below the 50% threshold value. It is reasonable to suggest that common method bias is not attributable to a single factor. The measurements do not appear to be affected by common method bias.

Table 26. Reliability and Validity

Construct	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Sense of Power	0.91113	0.86974	0.71971
eCourage	0.84886	0.74185	0.65355
Social Capital	0.87645	0.81167	0.63996
Voice	0.90890	0.86497	0.71479
Help	0.95076	0.93085	0.82844
Empower	0.87833	0.81687	0.64421
Disempower	0.93531	0.86357	0.87851
Note: AVE is average variance extracted.			

Table 27. Correlations between Constructs and Square Root of AVE
Legend: SP=Sense of Power; eC=eCourage; SC=Social Capital; Vo=Voice; He=Help; Em=Empower; Di=Disempower

Construct	SP	eC	SC	Vo	He	Em	Di
SP	0. 8084						
eC	0.2296	0.8000					
SC	0.6005	0.2000	0.8484				
Vo	0.6009	0.2802	0.6530	0.8455			
He	0.5834	0.2338	0.6934	0.7936	0.9102		
Em	0.5289	0.3426	0.5821	0.6819	0.6605	0.8026	
Di	0.0641	-0.0286	0.1253	0.1417	0.0994	0.0313	0.9373

Note: The diagonal values in grey are the square root of AVE.

Table 28. Cross Loadings
Legend: SP=Sense of Power; eC=eCourage; SC=Social Capital; Vo=Voice; He=Help; Em=Empower; Di=Disempower

Factor	SP	eC	SC	Vo	He	Em	Di
SP1	0.87684	0.21758	0.54930	0.58210	0.54506	0.51749	0.06341
SP2	0.83792	0.17721	0.44833	0.46852	0.44374	0.43265	0.00865
SP3	0.88299	0.23110	0.47394	0.47297	0.46305	0.46237	-0.06635
SP4	0.79260	0.14961	0.55637	0.50141	0.51697	0.37116	0.20552
eC1	0.05493	0.71085	0.05977	0.13551	0.14117	0.15042	-0.12194
eC2	0.21999	0.87998	0.21330	0.24518	0.22946	0.34384	-0.00016
eC3	0.23242	0.82521	0.17168	0.26964	0.18110	0.28999	0.00780
SC1	0.44472	0.18360	0.74959	0.52262	0.56445	0.56242	-0.01099
SC2	0.48488	0.10521	0.77892	0.46165	0.51890	0.35939	0.21286
SC3	0.56252	0.20073	0.84947	0.54594	0.58774	0.46068	0.15323
SC4	0.42724	0.14133	0.81831	0.55061	0.54069	0.46281	0.06155

Table 28. Cross Loadings (Continued)
Legend: SP=Sense of Power; eC=eCourage; SC=Social Capital; Vo=Voice; He=Help; Em=Empower; Di=Disempower

Factor	SP	eC	SC	Vo	He	Em	Di
Vo1	0.47117	0.09586	0.55080	0.78616	0.61939	0.43546	0.17052
Vo2	0.51745	0.31077	0.53272	0.88764	0.72544	0.63001	0.12900
Vo3	0.55152	0.29462	0.59633	0.91440	0.72771	0.66593	0.13414
Vo4	0.48720	0.23250	0.52620	0.78557	0.60384	0.55916	0.04546
He1	0.50882	0.21572	0.59111	0.71703	0.89591	0.60688	0.08106
He2	0.55474	0.24090	0.64403	0.72039	0.93600	0.60956	0.09861
He3	0.53555	0.21933	0.64298	0.73221	0.89389	0.59975	0.09757
He4	0.52364	0.17477	0.64470	0.72024	0.91432	0.58919	0.08411
Em1	0.33359	0.25042	0.38126	0.48815	0.46312	0.79843	-0.07957
Em2	0.32644	0.22842	0.35824	0.47655	0.49144	0.76835	-0.01908
Em3	0.46534	0.30122	0.54501	0.60912	0.56674	0.87687	0.03432

Table 28. Cross Loadings (Continued) Legend: SP=Sense of Power; eC=eCourage; SC=Social Capital; Vo=Voice; He=Help; Em=Empower; Di=Disempower							
Factor	SP	eC	SC	Vo	He	Em	Di
Em4	0.52978	0.30405	0.53995	0.58735	0.57779	0.76164	0.13070
Di1	0.08024	-0.01589	0.11214	0.13828	0.12264	0.02918	0.92212
Di2	0.04442	-0.03544	0.12204	0.12889	0.07018	0.02946	0.95222

5.3.2. Structural Model: PLS-SEM

The research model (Figure 15) and the hypotheses above in 5.1.2.2 were tested. Figure 18 provides a summary of the results. Note that in PLS-SEM analysis perceived *anonymity* and *intensity of twitter usage* were controlled for in the model.

Figure 16 displays the responses for the one anonymity item on remaining anonymous when using Twitter. The responses are similar to other items associated with anonymity. This is not significantly skewed in terms of the number of people who agree versus those who disagree. And, in testing the model, anonymity was accounted for in the model and was found to be not an influencer.

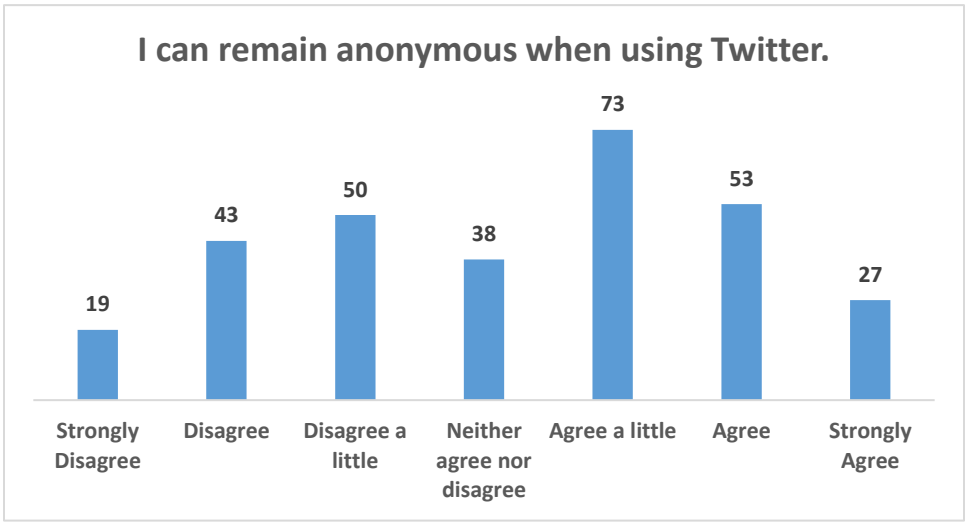

Figure 16. Variation in Remaining Anonymous

Figure 17 displays the responses for the one intensity of Twitter usage item on daily use of Twitter. The responses are similar to other items associated with intensity of Twitter usage. This is skewed to the left as the of number of people who agree is greater than those who disagree. And, in testing the model, intensity of Twitter usage was accounted for as an influencer on voice, helping, and empowering behaviors. Intensity of Twitter usage did not change disempowering behaviors.

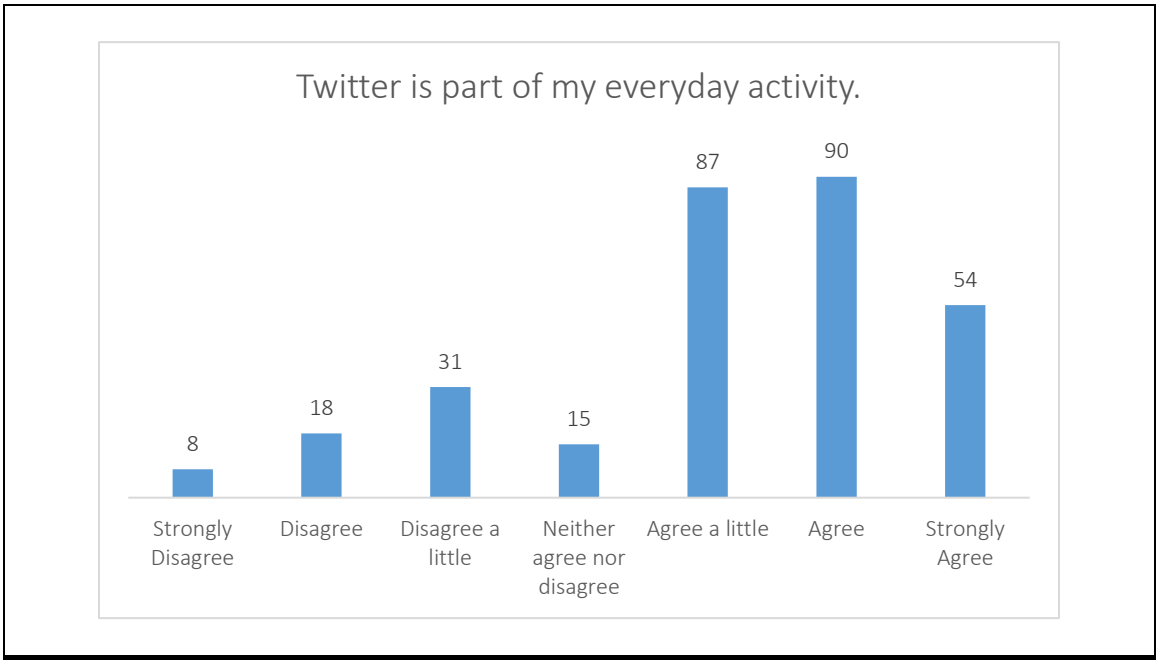

Figure 17. Variation in Daily Twitter Usage

Twitter users' personal sense of power significantly ($p<0.05$ and $p < 0.01$) influenced their behaviors to voice and help and to empower other users, but it has no significant influence on their behaviors to disempower others. Twitter users' eCourage significantly ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$) influenced their behaviors to voice and empower others, but it has no significant influence on their behaviors to help and disempower others. Twitter users' social capital significantly ($p<0.05$ and $p < 0.01$) influenced their behaviors to voice, help, and empower other users, but it has no significant influence on their behaviors to disempower others. The path coefficients and p-values can be found in Table 29.

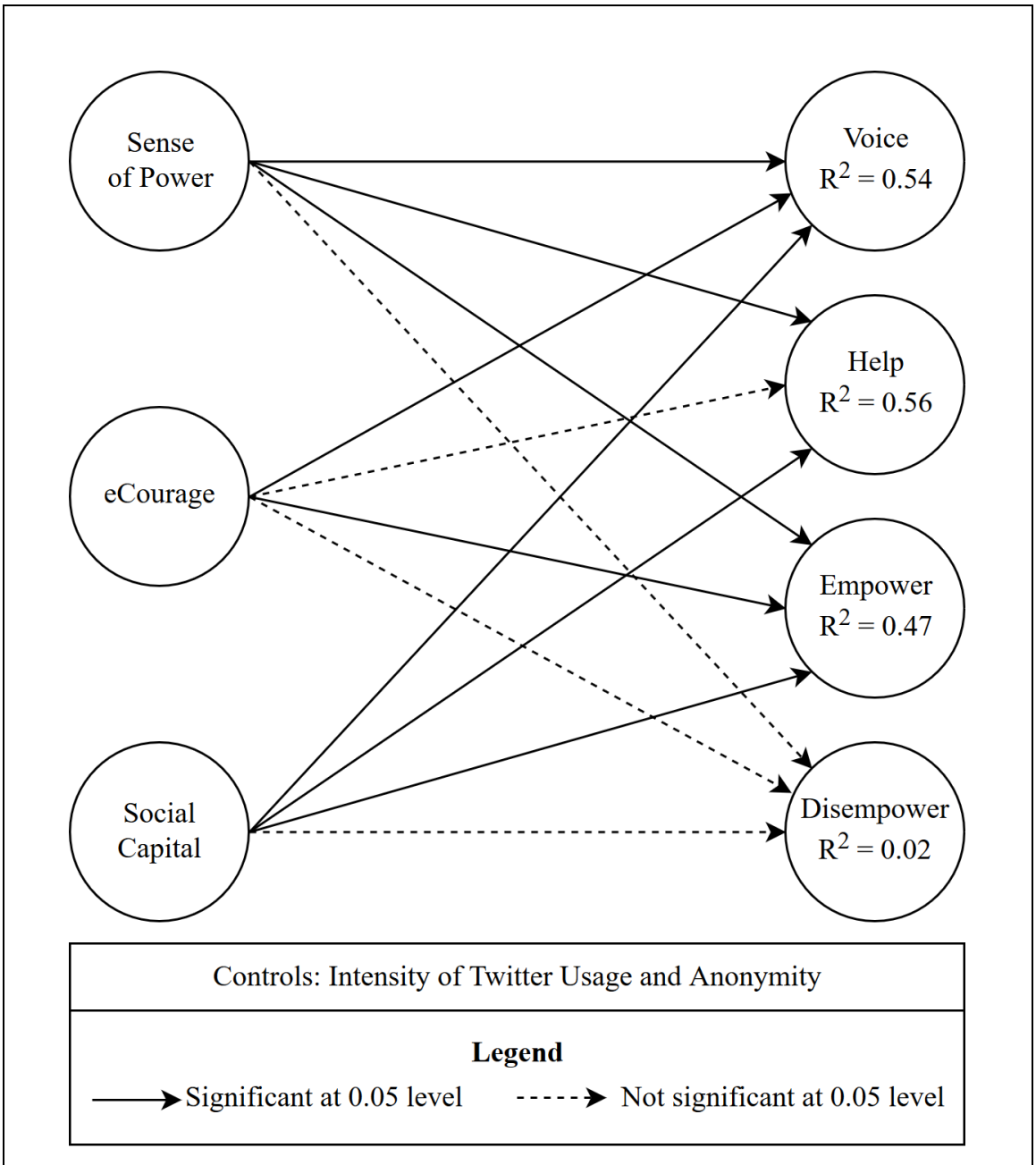

Figure 18. Phase III - Summary of Results

Table 29. Path Coefficients and P-Values				
Endogenous Construct	R^2	Explanatory Construct	Path Coefficient	Significance (p-value)
Voice	0.54	Sense of Power eCourage Social Capital	0.249 0.115 0.305	< 0.00001 0.019162 < 0.00001
Help	0.56	Sense of Power eCourage Social Capital	0.186 0.067 0.380	0.000434 0.185511 < 0.00001
Empower	0.47	Sense of Power eCourage Social Capital	0.175 0.202 0.223	0.003694 0.000247 0.002420
Disempower	0.02	Sense of Power eCourage Social Capital	-0.004 -0.059 0.142	0.963341 0.316182 0.162839

Sense of power, eCourage, and social capital explain 54% (R^2 = 0.54) of the variation in voicing behaviors. Sense of power and social capital explain 56% (R^2 = 0.56) of the variation in helping behaviors. Sense of power, eCourage, and social capital explain 47% (R^2 = 0.47) of the variation in empowering behaviors. The model explains 2% (R^2 = 0.02) of the variation in disempowering behaviors, but this cannot be attributed to sense of power, eCourage, or social capital as they are not significant influencers of disempowering behaviors.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This research presents an in-depth review of extant followership literature. Contemporary followership literature starting with Zalezink (1965) looked at active and passive patterns of behaviors and dominance/submission. Kelley (1988) popularized followership and examined independence, critical-thinking, and engagement associated with followers. Chaleff (1995) followed up Kelley (1988) by theorizing the courageous followers who challenge and support their leaders. Research continued with Kellerman (2007) and others examining the level of engagement along with many other constructs. There are diverse perspectives in followership research. This showcases the richness of the followership phenomenon presented in research and for business insights.

As the extant followership literature is organization-oriented, this research identifies a gap in extant literature; that is, there is a lack of followership research associated with social media platforms as is identified by Uhl-Bien et al. in 2014. Using followership theory as a venue for advancing knowledge and expounding on the social media phenomenon, this research studies Twitter followership. By connecting followership theory with the information technology artifact--Twitter, here, ITE followership is theorized. The followership theory is used to enable a better understanding of the followership phenomenon on social media platforms.

There are valid reasons for applying followership theory in social media contexts. Followers and followership exist on social media platforms. Again, it is important to note that on social media platforms the dominant syntax is one that is follower-centric. This may seem like a minor observation, but the dominant syntax is suggestive on the dominant narrative of follower power. Many scholars have theorized and defended the importance of followership research. Scholars such as Kelley (1988), Chaleff (1995), and Kellerman (2007) have paved the way in theorizing followership and followers. This research agrees with many of their views and expands on their views. However, here, the research identifies that extant followership research is limited in application when addressing social media phenomena.

On Twitter, followers are not employees, and the social media platform transforms the communication between followers and their leaders and thereby, the interaction. The social media platform transforms how followership and followers manifest. With the democratization of communication and information access along with proximity becoming a non-issue, the enactment of following and leading on social media platforms enables the social fabric, itself, to also be transformed. On these social media platforms, Twitter's social fabric is unlike that of an organization. The power is not hierarchically structured and distributed like in organizations. Also, in terms of the number of interactions between followers and leaders, the interactions have great complexity and have a greater magnitude of reach. It is important to note that Twitter users interact as both leaders and followers. More specifically, Twitter users as followers

are constructors of the social fabric (by the ways in which they form their identities and represent themselves) and are the role-players with causal agency as described by the constructionist lens and the role-based lens in extant literature.

This functionality of Twitter shifts how individuals (e.g., Twitter users), institutions (e.g., executive branch of the United States government) and organizations (e.g., United Airlines) operate. In alignment with Kellerman (2013), the social media platforms are a part-and-parcel of shifting power from individuals with authority to individuals who are the followers. This shift is in-line with historical and social trends where power continuously shifts away from authorities to the general populous with the advancements in information communication technologies. For example, today, tweets are a common part of the public discourse (e.g., news), and it is not uncommon for Twitter users to fact check statements within minutes to set the record straight and engage in discussion and controversies in real-time. In the past, this sort of power was not available to individuals who did not have access to the internet and other information and communication technologies such as social media platforms (e.g., Twitter). Now, it is much more difficult for authorities to dictate and spin localized narratives. Due to the changes in social and relational dynamics, once again with the functionality enabled by the social media platforms, the followership theory in extant literature with its organizational-orientation is inappropriate for theorizing Twitter followership and the associated ITE followership phenomenon. Also, with the shift in the power from the leaders to the followers, followership has become and will continue to become a more

important phenomenon for understanding social and relational dynamics on social media platforms across society.

Here, the research bridges the gaps in followership and social media platform research by theorizing Twitter followership and by providing the rational and the relational linkages to connect the nomological networks of organizational followership and Twitter followership. This research paves the way in theorizing and explaining social media followership and followers. Empirically, it examines the Twitter followership phenomenon.

In linking followership research to social media platforms, this research deems the formal theory of followership developed by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) to be appropriate for ITE followership research. Originally, the lenses devised by Uhl-Bein et al. (2014) were for looking at followership in organizations. In extant followership literature, the causal structures seem suitable for ITE followership. However, more inquiries are needed to verify the completeness of these lenses for ITE followership--Twitter followership. It is possible that the causal structure is incomplete for the purposes of studying followership on the social media platform because this social media platform enables emergent functionalities and the platform acts as both a mediator and moderator of users' intentions. That is, in organizations, leadership and followership occur by way of direct interactions whereas on the social media platform these interactions take place in multiple ways. For example, some users only interact on the platform while others may interact on-and-off the platform.

6.1. Phase I: Theorizing Social Media Followership

Informed by the focus group interviews using narrative analysis, Twitter's leader-follower interaction was posited (Figure 14). Narrative analysis involves analyzing stories. The stories were analyzed for content (e.g., what is said in the story) as a collection of stories from multiple people. By combining the content as a collection of stories, Twitter followership was summarized. Here, a decision was made to look at the collective stories to unravel the overarching narrative across the stories. In the diagram, the process by which followers and leaders/influencers interact with each other via the Twitter platform is illustrated. Self-representation as well as social and relational dynamics are present on the platform. It is unclear as to what the self-representation and social and relational dynamics involve. For example, on social media platforms, it is unclear if self-representation as well as social and relational dynamics can be explained by extant theories such as leader-member exchange or implicit followership theories.

The assumptions made in this research about Twitter followership and Twitter followers are in line with the depiction of leader-follower interaction on Twitter based on the narrative accounts of the Twitter users. Support for the assumptions demonstrates that followership as a phenomenon on Twitter exists. Based on these narrative accounts, it is clear that the followership is different from that in the other settings (e.g. organizations) which has been previously examined by other researchers. As already noted, there are offline or off-platform interactions. Some of the narratives included interactions which take place both on and off social media platforms with friends, family, and others familiar

to the users. Many users engage with each other on Twitter as well as offline. And, even if Twitter users interact off-line, they also communicate on or get information from Twitter. Thus, Twitter serves both as a mediator and a moderator of users' interactions. Therefore, Twitter followership offers a perceptive for exploring and understanding the Twitter phenomenon as well as other social media phenomenon by extension.

With support for the assumptions, the present research provides substantial evidence that followership theory is applicable to Twitter phenomenon. And, it is possible that followership theory is applicable in examining the phenomenon on other social media platforms as well. Also, with support for the assumptions, both the constructionist and role-based lenses devised by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) are appropriate for examining followership on Twitter. These lenses may lend themselves to examining followership phenomenon on other social media platforms as well.

Using the focus group discussion transcripts, followers' role-based characteristics and behaviors were identified. The follower constructs identified are novel in studies on social media platforms and followership.

6.2. Phase II: Describing Twitter's ITE Followership

Here, the identities formed are considered the outcome of the followers' interactions in relation to their leaders while engaging in the social construction on the Twitter platform. Applying social identity theory to Twitter followership, this research examines the identities arising from membership in social groups. With social identity theory, individuals expect to see conformity in the group. That is, individuals expect to

see leaders become like their followers. And, this expectation was substantiated in the results.

Using Python and IBM's Personality insights service, millions of tweets were collected and analyzed from Katy Perry and Bill Gates and hundreds of their followers. In this research, 22 dimensions of identity across Big Five personality dimensions, needs, and values were evaluated. This research compares followers and their leaders across these 22 dimensions.

When Katy Perry and Bill Gates were compared with their followers, there is support that Katy Perry and Bill Gates are like their followers across many of the dimensions. Katy Perry and Bill Gates match with their followers on 17 and 10 of the 22 dimensions, respectively. Katy Perry and Bill Gates appear to reflect their followers in many ways. They are very much like their followers in terms of the Big Five personalities. Katy Perry matches with her followers on all Big Five personality dimensions. It is important to note that Bill Gates differs from his followers on only one of the Big Five personality dimensions. There is some variation across needs and values. Karry Perry and Bill Gates shares 75% and 33% of their needs with their followers, respectively. Many of the differences in the needs are close to the cutoff, and the variations or the error could possibly be due to those in data collection. In terms of their values, Katy Perry is 80% like her followers and Bill Gates is 40% like his followers. When the 22 dimensions are considered in aggregate, there is evidence to suggest that

social media platforms (that is, Twitter) can generate identities with those identities being similar within followers.

Katy Perry and Bill Gates were very much like their followers in terms of their personalities. In general, Katy Perry is more like her followers in comparison to Bill Gates and his followers. She is more like her followers in needs and values whereas Bill Gates appears to be only somewhat like his followers in terms of needs and values. Perhaps, there are reasons for these differences between Katy Perry and Bill Gates which can be investigated further in the future.

6.3. Phase III: Understanding the ITE Followers Role

Here, the research examines the role of followers on Twitter by exploring their characteristics and behaviors. The role of followers is a multifaceted concept of the ITE followership phenomenon. In Phase I, narratives show that the users' self-representation involves using words and other symbols (e.g. likes and shares) to represent themselves. This representation manifests in the form of voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors. The theorized Twitter users' behaviors are in agreement with the leader-follower interaction. These behaviors allow us to understand the role of followers as well as leaders on Twitter because the roles are played in relation to the leaders.

This research identifies sense of power, eCourage, and social capital as the follower characteristics and voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors as the follower behaviors that are pertinent to followers' roles. These

characteristics and behaviors were identified in the focus group discussions. It is important to note that there might be many other characteristics to explore. Also, here, the research does not distinguish between in-role and extra-role behaviors. Note, in organizations, where followers are employees, they have in-role behaviors required by their employer, and there are extra-role behaviors performed by the employee that are not part of the formal requirements of the employer. It is unclear as to how this delineation would fit on the social media platform as followers are not employees required to perform a role. The identified constructs serve as building blocks in understanding Twitter's ITE followership from the perspective of Twitter users' role. There are many codes categorized. These codes, themselves, could be used to further explore Twitter roles.

This research uses a survey instrument to collect data from 303 Twitter users. With PLS-SEM, the data is analyzed, and Twitter users' roles were examined. The results show that sense of power, eCourage, social capital are significant factors in the model and that they have a significant influence on most of the Twitter users' behaviors (that is, voice, helping, and empowering behaviors).

There were some unexpected results. The relationship between sense of power and disempowering behaviors is unexpected as it would be reasonable to expect that sense of power would lead to users exercising their power and disempowering others. However, this is not the case. Also, eCourage was found to influence voice and empowering behaviors; however, surprisingly eCourage did not change helping and

disempowering behaviors. When Twitter users have more eCourage, they are not more helpful to the other users by affiliation. And, users do not seem to muster eCourage to disempower others as one would reason.

The R^2 for voice, helping, and empowering behaviors are 54%, 56%, and 47%. Thus, the model explains close to half the variance with only sense of power, eCourage, and social capital. The R^2 is only 2% for disempowering behaviors. Hence, the results do not reveal anything significant about the disempowering behaviors. As such, the present research does not explain disempowering behaviors on Twitter. Based on the coding done in Phase I of the focus group discussions, there is evidence to support that users engage in disempowering behaviors. However, here, the impact of characteristics associated with these behaviors on followership or by extension on leadership is unclear.

This exploratory research reveals significant relationships between characteristics and behaviors. It also reveals insights into the directionality of the relationships. All the significant paths had positive path coefficients. When sense of power increased, voice, helping, and empowering behaviors increased. When courage increased, voice and empowering behaviors increased. And, when social capital increased, voice, helping and empowering behaviors increased. None of the characteristics influenced disempowering behaviors, and the cause of these disempowering behaviors remains a mystery.

CHAPTER VII

CONTRIBUTIONS

7.1. Theorizing Social Media Followership

This research aims to frame followership on information technology platforms to examine the social media phenomenon. Using the focus group interviews, the phenomenon of Twitter followership, which is ITE followership on one platform, is better understood. Using the narratives from the focus groups, there is evidence to support the assumptions about the Twitter phenomenon. Thereby, this research establishes a basis for further inquiries into ITE followership on Twitter and possibly, other social media platforms.

With this research, a few ways to study the ITE followership on social media platforms are demonstrated. In information systems research, most of the interdisciplinary leadership work focuses on chief information officers (CIO) (Grover, Jeong, Kettinger, and Lee. 1993; Nah, Zuckweiler, and Lee-Shang Lau, 2003; Johnson and Lederer, 2003). The flip side of leadership is followership (McCallum, 2013). Theorizing followership on social media platforms opens new directions for research for both information systems as well as leadership scholars.

7.2. Conceptualizing Twitter's ITE Followership

In this research, the phenomenon of ITE followership on Twitter is conceptualized. This initial conceptualization may or may not capture the phenomenon. Nevertheless, this preliminary inquiry showcases the intricacies and complexities of followership on social media platforms triggering possibly subsequent research into understanding ITE followership. Assumptions about ITE followership on Twitter are verified. These assumptions serve as the basis for further inquiry by other researchers. The process of leader-follower interaction on Twitter is ideated and refined. In addition, the narratives of the Twitter users offer rich insight into the phenomenon.

7.3. Understanding Twitter's ITE Followers

Followers are examined through the constructionist and role-based lenses. The constructionist lens gives insights into what is happening on social media platforms between the followers and the leaders. Also, the identities as outcomes associated with the constructionist lens are described. With the role-based lens, insights into the role of Twitter users as followers and leaders/influencers is provided. Twitter users' characteristics and behaviors were identified, and the relationships were explored. Insights are gained into what characteristics make users behave in certain ways on the Twitter platform.

7.3.1. Constructionist Followership

This research extends the constructionist lens to examine identities on social media platforms. Based on the literature review, this research is the first to do this. The study's findings shed light on followership/leadership as a social and relational process. The outcome of Twitter identity is investigated. This research describes follower and leader personalities, values, and/or needs.

Understanding the identity of followers and the identity of the followed can help businesses understand their customers and influencers in more depth. Businesses can generate insights for "improving client acquisition, retention, and engagement, and to guide highly personalized engagements and interactions to better tailor their products, services, campaigns, and communications for individual clients" (IBM, 2018).

7.3.2. Role-based Followership

Insights are gained about Twitter followers' characteristics and behaviors. The significant characteristics identified include sense of power, eCourage, and social capital. Sense of power and eCourage are novel constructs in the examination of phenomenon on social media platforms. The behaviors identified include voice, helping, empowering behaviors, and disempowering behaviors. These constructs were adapted from the literature on organizational phenomenon, and they were applied to study the phenomenon of ITE followership on social media platforms. Using these insights, businesses can understand which followers are more likely to behave in certain ways. As the spread of information is critical in promotion, businesses can conduct network analysis and

understand nodes in a network, and especially Twitter users' behaviors and the extent of their influence.

7.4. Multiple Approaches to Study ITE Followership

ITE followership was studied from multiple perspectives. Two different theoretical lenses for inquiries into ITE followership were considered. The utility of these two-theoretical lenses for exploring ITE followership phenomenon is demonstrated. With the justification provided in this research, researchers can use the two lenses or expand on these lenses to study the ITE followership phenomenon further. And, multiple methods were used in the present research to examine the phenomenon of the ITE follower. This research provides theoretical and methodological guidance for future research into ITE followership. In this research, a different lenses and various methods are employed to demonstrate the multiple avenues for research into ITE followership.

7.4.1. Using Focus Groups to Study ITE Followership

In information systems research, very few studies employ the focus group method. This research showcases ITE followership as a phenomenon for which focus groups are suitable to use. It is an appropriate method to examine the construction of ITE followership as well as for identifying constructs. The method lent itself to collecting multiple perspectives on the phenomenon.

7.4.2. Using Big Data Analytics to Study ITE Followership

Social media analytics "is concerned with developing and evaluating informatics tools and frameworks to collect, monitor, analyze, summarize, and visualize social media data . . . to facilit[ate] conversations and interactions . . . [and] to extract useful patterns and intelligence . . ." (Fan and Gordan, 2014, p. 1). IBM Watson is increasingly used for cutting-edge research. For example, Watson for Oncology is being used to analyze a patient's medical information against a vast array of data and expertise to provide evidence-based treatment options. By engaging IBM's Watson, this present study takes advantage of its capability for large scale behavioral analysis of a large number of social media users. The capability of IBM's Watson Linguistic Analytics is characterized as follows: "The service can automatically infer, from potentially noisy social media, portraits of individuals that reflect their personality characteristics" (IBM, 2018). This research imparts an understanding based on analytics for an application in the context of social media followership. The big data analytics used here serve to describe the ITE followership outcomes.

7.4.3. Using Survey Method to Study ITE Followership

This research depicts an approach to studying ITE followership utilizing the survey method. The efficacy of utilizing this method to study ITE followership is demonstrated. The present research considers survey method as an appropriate approach for examining ITE followers and their associated characteristics and behaviors.

CHAPTER VIII

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1. Limitations

In Phase I, the conceptualization of ITE followership is incomplete. Here, I try to develop a basic ideation of the phenomenon to justify Phase II and III. A more in-depth analysis of the focus group discussion transcripts is required. To understand social media platforms, it is essential to understand the associated phenomena of ITE followership. The followership perspective offers a gateway into examining ITE followership on social media platforms. Much research remains to be done for an improved understanding of social media platforms.

In the focus groups, more women than men participated in the discussions. The focus group had more single Twitter users. The narratives generated may pose a bias. However, the findings are representative of the sample.

Existing followership theories can be considered in the context of social media platforms. For example, if an assumption is made by the researcher that all followers are not amorphous, Kellerman's follower typology can potentially be used as a framework for understanding different types of followers on social media platforms. This would allow a researcher to examine the varying types of followers based on the level of

engagement and their active support of leaders. Alternatively, a researcher could study the best way to characterize followers on social media platform.

In Phase II, the Twitter data and analyses are constrained due to resources. The process of collecting and cleaning the data was limited. It was only possible to collect a list of 649 and 700 followers for Katy Perry and Bill Gates, respectively. Due to the same resource constraints, it was not possible to collect data from many more leaders and their followers. MAE is used as the cutoff value for comparison. Relationships that are identified are not causal inferences. Potential relationships are only described.

As for Phase III, only a few important follower characteristics and follower behaviors were explored. Again, due to the constraints of time and budget, it is not feasible to study all of the characteristics and behaviors. The PLS-SEM analysis uses the data is collected from a limited number of 303 participants.

8.2. Future Research

For future research, there are many opportunities. The constructivist and role-based lenses can be used to study many aspects of ITE followership. The constructivist lens offers a way to study the follower-leader interaction and the outcomes on social media platforms. The followership phenomenon is broad; thus, it offers many directions for future inquiry into followers and leaders on social media platforms. A researcher can draw on perspectives such as the social identity theory and followership theory (e.g., Leader-Member Exchange theory) to develop and conceptualize followership on a social

media platform. In addition, a different method (e.g., network analysis) can be used to study ITE followership.

There are several extensions to this research which can be pursued. ITE followership can be studied on different social media platforms. Followership can be examined across multiple IT followership platforms. Researchers can build on this research, and they can further clarify and ideate the concept of ITE followership. The constructs identified in this research can be studied further. More constructs can be discovered. Big data analytics offer a novel way to study the phenomenon on social media platforms. The approach to social media analytics described here can be used for many applications. Researchers can apply the approach in this research to other instances. For example, more than two leaders can be examined, or change in the identity of the social media user over time can be studied. Also, the relationships identified using the approach to analytics here can be verified and examined.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

This research establishes followership and followers as essential concepts in the phenomena on social media platforms. Organizational followership theory is extended as theoretical foundations for studying followership on social media platforms. Rational is provided for extending organizational followership theory to followership on social media platforms. This rational allows for the proposition that ITE followership is similar to organizational followership. Therefore, organizational followership theory is appropriate and applicable to ITE followership. However, this research also identified that followership on social media platforms is different from organizational followership. Through radical novelty, the social media platforms enable an ITE followership phenomenon, and this followership has a unique form. By examining Twitter in-depth, this research demonstrated the application and the value of followership theory in describing and explicating followership on social media platforms.

In Phase I, the construction of Twitter followership was investigated with the qualitative data from the focus groups. An initial model of the process of follower-leader interaction was conceptualized. This conceptualization revealed the innerworkings of Twitter interactions. Unlike the typical relational models, this research found that Twitter transformed the follower-leader interaction by acting as mediator and a moderator of

interactions. That is, the social media platform is situated between users and is influencing the users by indirect means. And, the users engaged in representation of themselves and Twitter offered social and relational dynamics. In the qualitative data from the focus groups, the narratives from Twitter users supported this followership conceptualization.

Also, in Phase I, followership assumptions were verified. The assumptions were also examined with the qualitative data from the focus groups. Qualitative data from the focus groups generated the narratives from Twitter users which supported the followership assumptions. With the assumptions supported beyond rational justification, this research provided empirical justification for the abduction and application of followership theory for investigating followers and followership to social media platforms phenomena. That is, this research justifies the abduction and application of formal followership theory to Twitter followership. As a result, the constructionist and role-based were deemed suitable for present and future Twitter followership research. And, by extension from Twitter, formal followership theory was identified as suitable for theorizing and examining ITE followership on other social media platforms as well.

In Phase II, a vast amount of Twitter data was collected. Millions of tweets were gathered using the Twitter API. This research developed and outlined an approach to examine millions of tweets to understand followership and followers. The collected Twitter data was analyzed using IBM Watson Personality Insights service, and this resulted in output describing Twitter identities. The identities formed as a byproduct of

the follower-leader interactions revealed strong similarities between followers and their leaders. That is, leaders were found to be more like their followers. And, this research found evidence to suggest that there are outcomes resulting from the social construction of followership. That is, this research is in line with the constructionist lens, and it indicates the presence of social construction on Twitter.

In Phase III, this research explored the Twitter followers' role by investigating important characteristics and behaviors associated with Twitter followership. The constructs identified include sense of power, eCourage, social capital, voice, help, empowerment behaviors, and disempowerment behaviors. The followers' characteristics --sense of power, eCourage, and social capital--were found to be significant in influencing the followers' behaviors--voice, help, and empowerment behaviors. The characteristics explain close to 50% of the variance in the behaviors (voice, help, and empowerment behaviors). This research is in line with the role-based lens, and it indicates the presence of roles on Twitter.

Based on the research here on Twitter followership, the theorization of ITE followership is supported. A basic concept of Twitter followership was conceptualized. The research identified a likeness between followers and their leader. This research paves the way for further theorizing and examining the social construction and outcomes associated with Twitter's ITE followership. Also, this research presented ways in which followers enact their role in Twitter followership. It identified key constructs associated with Twitter's social processes and roles. This research paves the way to further

theorizing and examining Twitter roles. Overall, this research significantly added to the general body of knowledge on followership and Twitter. And, this work directs practitioners and researchers who are interested in examining and understanding ITE followership/Twitter followership. By extension, this research also provided insights into social media influencers (leaders) and leadership as well as followers and followership operate in relation to social media influencers (leaders) and their leading.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Scale: 1=Disagree strongly; 2=Disagree; 3=Disagree a little; 4=Neither agree nor disagree; 5= Agree a little; 6=Agree; 7=Agree strongly

Sense of Power on Twitter

- Item 1: On Twitter, I can get other people to pay attention to what I Tweet.
    - *Original: I can get him/her/them to listen to what I say.*
    - *Note: According to Twitter, there are different types of Tweets (General Tweets, Mentions, Replies, Retweets, Quote Tweets, protected Tweets, and Promoted Tweets).*
- Item 2: On Twitter, even if I voice my views, they have little sway. (r)
    - *Original: Even if I voice them, my views have little sway. (r)*
- Item 3: On Twitter, my ideas and opinions are often ignored. (r)
    - *Original: My ideas and opinions are often ignored. (r)*
- Item 4: On Twitter, I think I have a great deal of power.
    - *Original: I think I have a great deal of power.*

eCourage

- Item 5: On Twitter, intense social pressure would not stop me from doing the right thing.

- *Original: Intense social pressure would not stop me from doing the right thing.*

- Item 6: I would risk rejection by important others for a chance at communicating my thoughts.
  - *Original: I would risk rejection by important others for a chance at achieving my life goals.*
- Item 7: On Twitter, I would Tweet and do what I wanted to do, even though, I might be harassed.
  - *Original: I would go where I wanted to go and do what I wanted to do, even though, I might be bullied as an ethic minority.*
- Item 8: I would refuse instructions from a respected person if it meant hurting someone needlessly on Twitter.
  - *Original: I would refuse the order of a commanding officer if it meant hurting someone needlessly.*

Social Capital

- Item 9: Interacting with people on Twitter makes me feel like a part of a larger community.
  - *Original: Bridging Capital: Interacting with people at MSU makes me feel like a part of a larger community.*
- Item 10: There are several people on Twitter I trust to solve my problems.

- *Original: Bonding Capital: There are several people at MSU I trust to solve my problems.*

- Item 11: If I needed to, I could ask a Twitter acquaintance to do a small favor for me.
  - *Original: Maintaining Capital: If I needed to, I could ask a high school acquaintance to do a small favor for me.*
- Item 12: I would be able to find information about something important from a Twitter acquaintance.
  - *Original: Maintaining Capital: I would be able to find information about a job or internship from a high school acquaintance.*

Voice

- Item 13: I develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect others on Twitter.
  - *Original: I develop and make recommendations concerning issues that affect this work group.*
- Item 14: I speak up and encourage others on Twitter to get involved in issues that affect other people.
  - *Original: I speak up and encourages others in this group to get involved in issues that affect the group.*
- Item 15: I get involved in issues that affect the general well-being of others on Twitter.

- *Original: I get involved in issues that affect the quality of work life here in this work group.*

- Item 16: I keep well informed about issues where my opinions might be useful to other people on Twitter.
  - *Original: I keep well informed about issues where my opinion might be useful to this work group.*

Helping

- Item 17: On Twitter, I get involved to benefit others.
  - *Original: I get involved to benefit this work group.*
- Item 18: I play a role that helps others on Twitter.
  - *Original: I attend functions that help this work group.*
- Item 19: I help others on Twitter to learn about new things.
  - *Original: I help others in this group learn about the work.*
- Item 20: I provide support on Twitter to the benefit others.
  - *Original: I assist others in this group with their work for the benefit of the group.*

Empower

- Item 21: I would tweet (or like a post) to influence a policy or issue.
  - *Original: Wrote a letter or made a telephone call to influence a policy or issue.*
- Item 22: I would tweet (or like a post) to promote information.

- *Original: Attending an event promoting information about community services.*

- Item 23: I would engage in a conversation about an issue affecting my Twitter community.
  - *Original: Had an in-depth, face-to-face conversation about an issue affecting your community.*
- Item 24: I would arrange and outline things to be discussed on Twitter.
  - *Original: Arranged an agenda for a public meeting.*

Disempower

- Item 25: I would ignore a Tweet that makes complaints.
  - *Pilot: I would dismiss an unpleasant Tweet.*
  - *Original: Do staff fail to assist you with tasks you cannot do?*
- Item 26: I would refuse to share or like a Tweet.
  - *Original: Do staff fail to assist you with tasks you cannot do?*
- Item 27: I would Tweet to lower the confidence (self-regard) of others.
  - *Original: Do staff make remarks which lower your self-esteem (self-regard)?*
- Item 28: I would Tweet to talk down at other people as if they were children.
  - *Pilot: I would Tweet to talk down at other people as if they were children.*
  - *Original: Do staff talk down to you as though you were a child?*
- Item 29: I would Tweet against the opinions of others.

- *Original: Do staff move your bed and locker to different parts of the ward against your wishes?*

Intensity of Twitter Usage

- Item 30: Twitter is part of my everyday activity.
  - *Original: Facebook is part of my everyday activity.*
- Item 31: I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Twitter for a while.
  - Original: I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.
- Item 32: I feel I am part of the Twitter community.
  - *Original: I feel I am part of the Facebook community.*
- Item 33: I am proud to tell people I am on Twitter.
  - *Original: I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.*

Anonymity

- Item 34: It is easy for me to hide how I use Twitter.
  - *Original: It is easy for me to hide how I use ICTs.*
- Item 35: I can remain anonymous when using Twitter.
  - *Original: I can remain anonymous when using ICTs.*
- Item 36: It is easy for me to hide my Twitter usage.
  - *Original: It is easy for me to hide my ICT usage.*
- Item 37: It is difficult for others to identify my use of Twitter.
  - *Original: It is difficult for others to identify my use of ICTs*.

Gender

- *Item 38:* Gender (*Scale: Male; Female; Other)*

Age

- *Item 39:* Age (*Scale: 18-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65+)*

Education

- *Item 40:* What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? (If you're currently enrolled in school, please indicate the highest degree you have received.) (*Scale: Less than a high school diploma; High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED); Some college, no degree; Associate degree (e.g. AA, AS); Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS); Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd); Professional degree (e.g. MD, DDS, DVM, JD); Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD))*

Work Experience

- Item 41: How many years of work experience do you have? (*Scale: 0; 1-5; 6-10; 11-15; 16+)*

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL: PHASE I

To: Vishal Uppala
Info Sys and Supply Chn Mngmt

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 11/28/2017

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Exemption Category: 2. Survey, interview, public observation
Study #: 17-0548
Study Title: Information Technology Enabled Followership on Social Media Platforms

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

To understand the phenomenon of ITE followership on social media platforms, focus groups will be employed to investigate the concept of ITE followership and to verify the assumptions about ITE followership.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. Please utilize the most recent and approved version of your consent form/information sheet when enrolling participants. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. **Stamped consent forms must be used unless the IRB has given you approval to waive this requirement.** Please notify the ORI office immediately if you have an issue with the stamped consents

forms.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/research_data/.

CC:
Prashant Palvia, Info Sys and Supply Chn Mngmt

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL: PHASE II

To: Vishal Uppala
Info Sys and Supply Chn Mngmt

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 9/27/2017

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Exemption Category: 4.Existing data, public or deidentified
Study #: 17-0425
Study Title: Information Technology Enabled Followership on Social Media Platforms

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

This research describes and explicates the phenomenon of information technology enabled (ITE) followership on social media platforms. One social media platform, Twitter, is studied in depth. Drawing from followership research, I empirically explore the ITE followership phenomenon. Twitter data is collected from the followers and the followed, and using linguistic analytic techniques, the Twitter identities formed as a byproduct of leader-follower interaction are examined.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. Please utilize the most recent and approved version of your consent form/information sheet when enrolling participants. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

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Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/research_data/.

CC:
Prashant Palvia, Info Sys and Supply Chn Mngmt

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL: PHASE III

To: Vishal Uppala
Info Sys and Supply Chn Mngmt

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 3/29/2018

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Exemption Category: 2.Survey, interview, public observation
Study #: 18-0177
Study Title: Information Technology Enabled Followership on Social Media Platforms

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

To understand the phenomenon of information technology enabled (ITE) followership on social media platforms, a survey will be employed to understand the relationships between followers' characteristics and behaviors.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. Please utilize the most recent and approved version of your consent form/information sheet when enrolling participants. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. **Stamped consent forms must be used unless the IRB has given you approval to waive this requirement.** Please notify the ORI office immediately if you have an issue with the stamped consent

forms.

Please be aware that valid human subjects training and signed statements of confidentiality for all members of research team need to be kept on file with the lead investigator. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university "Access To and Retention of Research Data" Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/research_data/.

CC:
Prashant Palvia, Info Sys and Supply Chn Mngmt

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE TWEEPY PYTHON CODE

```
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
#This code is for getting the profile data.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
import tweepy
import csv

from tweepy import OAuthHandler

consumer_key = 'HuJn3kRljxaYd1l0OggW36THO'
consumer_secret =
'rWXayXfg6k4uMftA1yQbByl7Qymb2XEa1YAehecKb6LO9Au73E'
access_token = '823278207654887424-SJnPPED9Qz9LAujnRwXRniSstMK4qlm'
access_secret = '0cb2uq5KUrqzcgnedxkIzqpLRDhX9diObQutC20ksrjWw'

auth = OAuthHandler(consumer_key, consumer_secret)
auth.set_access_token(access_token, access_secret)
api = tweepy.API(auth)

csvFile = open('KatyProfiles.csv', 'a')
csvWriter = csv.writer(csvFile)

user_a ='@katyperry'
user_b ='@kpcollections'
is_following =
api.show_friendship(source_screen_name=user_a,target_screen_name=user_b)

user = api.get_user('@kpcollections')

csvWriter.writerow([user.screen_name, user.name, user.statuses_count,
user.friends_count, user.followers_count, user.favourites_count,
user.description.encode('utf-8'), user.geo_enabled, user.time_zone,
user.profile_location, user.location, user.lang, user.created_at, user.id, user.protected,
user.profile_image_url, is_following.following])

csvFile.close()
```

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE IBM WATSON PERSONALITY INSIGHTS PYTHON CODE

```
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
#This code is import txt file. And, export CSV with personality.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

?headers=True

import requests
import json
import csv

file = open('load.txt', 'r')

response = requests.post("https://gateway.watsonplatform.net/personality-
insights/api?headers=True",
        auth = ("41d8f937-e06d-407e-a2bf-f632321054b9", "KPxuEbjBdDle"),
        headers = {"content-type": "text/html", "Accept": "text/csv"},
        data = file.read())

with open('personality-insights.csv', 'a', newline='') as f:
        mywriter = csv.writer(f, delimiter=' ', quotechar=" ",
quoting=csv.QUOTE_MINIMAL)
        mywriter.writerow(response.text)
        f.close()
```

APPENDIX G

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